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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

**Blended learning in Higher Education
to enhance learners English Language
skills**

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ABSTRACT

Learning a language can be a continuous struggle for non-English language learners due to several emerging or conventional barriers. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), such as the one in Ecuador, it is important to count on research developed at the classroom level where students face EFL struggles. Thus, this study is conducted to analyse the effectiveness of blended learning approaches in enhancing the skills of higher education learners.

First, a pre-test was implemented to determine the learners' English language background to develop activities that integrate a blended learning approach versus traditional ones. All of the proposed activities focus on developing communicative skills, grammar, and vocabulary in context.

Additionally, through a mixed-research process, students' and professors' language practice preferences and digital tools and corpus preferences were identified. In order to come about with the data, two surveys were administered, and an observation checklist was used to study the relation between both research variables. The findings show that the blended learning approach is an emerging approach that provides encouraging alternatives for EFL teaching practices, so students get actively involved in class and out-of-class activities.

RESUMEN

El aprendizaje de un idioma puede ser una lucha continua para los estudiantes que no hablan inglés debido a varias barreras emergentes o convencionales. En contextos del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE), como es el caso de Ecuador, es posible identificar la necesidad del análisis del contexto académico. En la educación superior es significativo contar con investigaciones desarrolladas a nivel de las aulas en las que los estudiantes enfrentan las luchas con ILE. Por lo tanto, este estudio se lleva a cabo para analizar la eficacia de los enfoques de aprendizaje mixto en el mejoramiento de las habilidades comunicativas de los estudiantes de Educación Superior.

En primer lugar, se llevó a cabo una prueba inicial para determinar los conocimientos de inglés de los estudiantes. Estos resultados fueron la base para el diseño de actividades que integraban el aprendizaje mediante un enfoque mixto frente a los enfoques tradicionales. Las actividades diseñadas se centraron en el desarrollo de las destrezas comunicativas, la gramática y el vocabulario contextualizado.

Además, a través de un proceso de investigación mixta, se identificaron las preferencias de los estudiantes y profesores en cuanto a prácticas lingüísticas. También se identificaron las herramientas digitales y las preferencias de corpus digitales. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos fueron dos encuestas y se utilizó una lista de comprobación de observación para cubrir la relación de ambas variables de investigación. Los resultados indican que los enfoques de aprendizaje mixto son emergentes y proporcionan alternativas alentadoras para las prácticas de enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, gracias a que los estudiantes usan la lengua extranjera, inglés, en actividades dentro y fuera de clase.

RESUM

Aprendre una llengua pot ser una lluita contínua per als estudiants que no parlen anglès a causa de diverses barreres emergents o convencionals. En contextos d'anglès com a llengua estrangera (ALE) com el de l'Equador, és important comptar amb la investigació desenvolupada a nivell d'aules on els estudiants s'enfronten a les dificultats amb l'ALE. Per tant, aquest estudi es duu a terme per analitzar l'eficàcia dels enfocaments d'aprenentatge combinat en la millora de les habilitats dels estudiants d'educació superior. Primer, es va implementar una prova prèvia per determinar els antecedents lingüístics de l'aprenent, contribuint a activitats que integren l'aprenentatge combinat mètode enfront dels mètodes tradicionals. Totes elles es van centrar en el desenvolupament de les habilitats comunicatives, la gramàtica i el context del vocabulari.

A més, mitjançant un procés d'investigació mixta, es van identificar les preferències de pràctica lingüística dels estudiants i professors. També es van identificar les preferències d'eines digitals i de corpus digital. Per obtenir les dades, es van aplicar les següents tècniques d'investigació: dues enquestes i observació. Per tant, com a tècniques d'investigació, es van administrar dues enquestes en general i es va utilitzar una llista de verificació d'observació per cobrir la relació d'ambdues variables d'investigació. Les troballes indiquen que els mètodes d'aprenentatge combinat són enfocaments emergents que ofereixen alternatives encoratjadores per a les pràctiques d'ensenyament de l'anglès com a llengua estrangera, de manera que els estudiants s'involucrin activament en les activitats de classe i fora de classe.

DEDICATORY NOTE

In the hopes that this research work might support the enhancement of learning in Foreign Language settings, thereby providing enriched educational practices, this dedication is for stakeholders, academics, researchers, learners, and future professionals in this field of study who strive to deliver quality education to university learners with cutting-edge and authentic resources.

This study is also dedicated to learners from non-native English-speaking countries. Their active involvement in this emerging learning world is encouraged and essential for them to become more competitive in this global context.

Furthermore, I extend my heartfelt acknowledgement to the learners of the journalism school and EFL professors who were willingly involved in this research design. Their participation is greatly appreciated.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The transformative impact of the 21st century is increasingly reshaping the paradigms of language acquisition, with a particular focus on foreign (FL) and second language learning (SLL). With a rising demand for multilingualism, universities worldwide face a pivotal challenge, optimising teaching and learning in specialised education (Kong et al., 2021).

Simultaneously, Sri Mulyanto et al. (2020) suggest that technological advancements have been introduced in an age of unprecedented convenience and accessibility. Therefore, the field of education needs to follow this trend to meet the evolving challenges of the modern era. The goals of education in the 21st century have expanded beyond mere knowledge to encompass the mastery of science, the development of metacognitive skills, the cultivation of critical and creative thinking abilities, and the enhancement of practical communication skills.

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, the English language has emerged as a paramount international medium of communication, seeping into every facet of human life, from commerce to information, communication, technology (ICT), and most notably, education. The prominence of English as a global academic lingua franca has resulted in the 'anglicisation' of academic disciplines and numerous university programs (Kithinji & OHirsi, 2022).

It is also important to mention that, although all of the development in the area of general education, the field of English language education was irrevocably transformed by the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which precipitated a swift and comprehensive shift to online learning. This transition was further accelerated by the facilitative role of social media platforms. These communication technologies have created a new digital learning environment characterised by seamless interaction and communication across diverse individuals with distinct ideologies, cultures, languages, and backgrounds (Muftah, 2024).

As learning adapts to the real-world conditions of diverse countries and contexts, fostering critical thinking and enhancing essential skills and competences remains paramount. The outbreak of the pandemic generated an atmosphere of profound uncertainty due to its rapid contagion and transmission rates, prompting an immediate and expansive adoption of online learning solutions (Sri Mulyanto et al., 2020).

The global trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has compelled experts to critically reassess prevailing teaching and learning pedagogies. The sustainability of these pedagogies is being rigorously examined within the context of ongoing global health crises. This is the leading consequence of the endorsement of blended learning as a practical, viable solution for the post-pandemic educational stage (Saboowala & Manghirmalani Mishra, 2021).

Given the previous viewpoints, this study ventures into the complex realm of language learning and acquisition in the modern era. Its main aim is to investigate the impact of the blended learning approach and its models in higher education for the development of the students' English language proficiency. Additionally, it delves into the effectiveness of diverse online and technology-mediated tools and resources in facilitating fluency in the English language. Based on these key elements, this study is identified as part of the line of research on e-language learning from the computer-assisted language teaching group at Universitat Politècnica de València.

To address the challenges of modern learning, this study explores the dynamic nuances of language learning fostered by the convergence of tradition, technology, and global interconnectedness. The transformative potential of blended learning in higher education is a promising pathway to linguistic empowerment in the post-pandemic era. Hence, this study involves evaluating the impact of blended learning models, recognising challenges faced by learners in blended learning environments, documenting preferences of both learners and educators, and examining the effectiveness of online tools for English language learning.

1.2 Objectives of the dissertation

Based on the generalities presented above, this section outlines the foundations for the research process to be followed, taking into account the topic of this thesis, which corresponds to Blended Learning as an approach for Foreign Language Learning.

To start with the formulation of the research process, it is necessary to present the general research question (GRQ) to guide this study, which can be expressed as:

GRQ: How effective is the use of the blended learning approach in enhancing English as Foreign Language skills in university learners?

From the general question and considering that the blended learning approach is a mixed approach to English learning, three specific questions have been thought about. These specific questions deal with the specificity of learning aspects that need to be included in the format of blended learning in relation to the materials, the atmosphere, the place, schedules, courses, and the influence of the online component that is implemented when blended learning takes place.

For the purpose of this dissertation, the first Specific Research Question is related to the approach that will be applied to the students participating in this study.

University non-language learners find learning a foreign language difficult because they cope with the lack of enthusiasm, deficient educational practices and opportunities to apply it in real communication contexts (Odesa National University of Economics & Petrova, 2024). Therefore, a responsibility of EFL teachers is to create those close to real communication contexts. This task can be facilitated by means of the use of information technologies. Nowadays, emergent technologies appeal to learners. Since technology allows learning to take place anywhere and at any time, it is an alternative for teachers to plan their EFL classes. It is important to consider that the learning process happens when the students feel interested in knowing about something, and technology opens opportunities for students to have access to new learning topics in the different areas of knowledge that can be addressed in EFL classes. At the same time, learning occurs when the student faces

challenges in life tasks, which motivate students to engage in acquiring knowledge (Al-Samarraie et al., 2020) and (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023). These tasks can be facilitated by means of technology in EFL content.

SRQ1: What factors benefit the learning process of English as a Foreign Language in university students when faced with blended learning environments?

The employment of adequate strategies can help lessen the learning of English as a foreign language in class (Sokip, 2020). Thus, it is essential to employ hybrid strategies that involve learners actively in the learning process. Authentic and appealing resources with the integration of technology might motivate EFL learning processes (Hwang et al., 2015). Therefore, educational technologies applied in EFL can be used synchronically and asynchronously to help the learners achieve effective results, develop better attitudes toward their learning experiences, and dedicate more effort in the learning process of the foreign language, in this case, English (Hung, 2015).

Another important aspect to consider in this study is related to strategies for learning English as a Foreign Language. Therefore, the second specific question for research is designed as follows.

SRQ2: What sort of strategies can be developed to facilitate the English learning process by means of a blended learning approach in higher education students?

It is essential for this research to understand the learners' viewpoint towards the learning process. Students who participate in this study can inform on such aspects as what makes the content easy, useful and clear. They can also provide information on what strategies contribute to adjusting the way in which the content delivery process is provided by teachers, and what strategies work better in their language practice (Sukisno et al., 2022); (Kuswanty et al., 2023).

The third specific question below deals with the point of view of students in relation to the effectiveness of blended learning activities applied to foreign language

learning.

SRQ3: How do university students perceive the effectiveness of the blended learning approach applied during the implementation of this study for the learning process?

Based on the research questions above, a hypothesis that can be established to test the validity of this research process is related to the process of teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language to the specific population, which is included in the study. Considering blended learning as an approach that evolved after the pandemics period of humanity in the year 2010 up to 2021 in which students and teachers were sent to their houses to learn and to teach, respectively, it is important to recognize the value of these emerging approaches and models that permit students and teachers to continue their academic life from their houses and later when people returned to the normality of life in their respective schools.

Since this was one of the experiences faced by the researcher, the possibility to test the value of Blended Learning in English as a Foreign Language Learning in a specific context makes it a rich experience to provide conclusions in the specific academic field of learning Foreign Languages. Therefore, the hypothesis (H) that is established corresponds to:

H: Employing a blended learning approach in higher education, which combines the advantages of traditional and e-learning methods, can meaningfully contribute to enhancing learners' English language skills.

In addition, this research is undertaken with the goal of determining the effectiveness of integrating a blended learning approach into higher education settings to enhance the English language proficiency of learners.

1.3 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is organised in ten chapters, each addressing a distinct element of the research process. For instance, the first six chapters support the theoretical foundations for the study, and the four remaining chapters discuss the research methodology, results and conclusion sections.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 present descriptions related to general information on the topic of this paper. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the background information relevant to this research, the objectives designed for this study, and the theoretical bases, including the methodologies adopted in different papers developed for higher education in English as a Foreign Language. Chapter 2 reviews academic texts from national and international contexts related to teaching English in higher education, as they comprise a state of the art in EFL teaching and learning. It integrates sections about English language competence and proficiency levels based on the Common European Framework (CEF) for Languages. In this section of the paper, English language skills are reviewed in relation to ground teaching practices in EFL. Chapter 3 examines and discusses the different language learning strategies and skills needed for teaching and learning languages. In this case, English as a second or foreign language is described. This chapter is divided into two main sections that express what authors in the field of ESL or EFL argue in relation to learning paradigms and strategies, as they provide rich insights for the research stages in the topic of blended learning for higher education students in Ecuador.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 discuss more updated resources for teaching foreign languages. Chapter 4 presents the role of technology in higher education contexts. It explores various aspects that have influenced changes in education, such as the transition from traditional EFL education to a more advanced education based on the use of technology in EFL learning settings. This chapter highlights the challenges faced during the pandemic period, in which, due to problems with COVID-19, teachers and students had to change their attendance in schools for classes in a home academic environment. Chapter 5 introduces the use of a blended learning approach in English higher education. This chapter is based on constructing the conceptual framework for this study, considering a contrastive scheme. It emphasises the benefits of a blended learning approach after the post-pandemic COVID-19 health issues, as new academic trends appear for EFL learning. Chapter 6 compares academic practices in the field of EFL learning and teaching. This chapter also provides insights about emergent technological trends, methodologies, strategies and resources that together with blended learning can constitute a difference in the proficiency levels students achieve in EFL settings.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 deal with the research stages in this study. Chapter 7 draws on the research methodology based on the materials and research methods. The first part of the chapter presents the participants and the different corpora employed in this thesis. The second part describes the outline and development of the data corpus setting and timing in the learning process. Chapter 8 shows the findings obtained from the data analysis. In this section, five fundamental findings are shown to support the study's target. Chapter 9 discusses the most relevant findings in order to interpret the results based on the aim of the study, the research questions and the hypotheses established.

Chapter 10 provides a general conclusion by means of a summary based on the aspects studied as part of the paper and as part of the research process applied. Some recommendations for future research in the context of EFL teaching and learning processes are mentioned, and blended learning is highlighted in the last part of this chapter.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter focuses on academic texts related to the teaching of English as a foreign language, which correspond to the background knowledge needed to establish a framework for this study.

2.1. English, a foreign language in higher education

Learning English as a foreign language in non-native countries can provide an umbrella of favourable shifts in learners' personal and professional profiles due to the fact, they can be involved in academic and international labour contexts. Higher education institutions continuously promote the benefits of English acquisition in order to deal with the English learning backgrounds of learners. Moreover, these centres employ academic standards or guidelines articulated with the norms imposed by the government in office to increase their involvement in foreign language international standards.

Oktavia et al. (2022) define English as an international language that impacts international relations, economy, and education. It also represents an essential requirement to get a good job. English usage will cater to people's benefits to increase their participation in achieving global goals. According to Gayatri et al. (2023), supported by Zuparova et al. (2020), the use of English around the world shows that the world around us is changing and becoming more multicultural than it was before. There are many foreigners everywhere, and travelling has become so easy that it is possible for almost everyone. Being able to communicate in English with foreigners is reasonably necessary when in tourism or when participating in international academic events.

According to Kithinji and Ohirsi (2022), English has become an international language for communication and teaching. Hence, English as a language of instruction in higher education is a rapidly developing phenomenon in most non-Anglophone countries of the world, and with the increasing numbers of English speakers, higher education programs are adopting English as the language of instruction, due to educators and policymakers respond to the demand for an international context of learning.

Therefore, the use of English in teaching academic subjects, especially in places where the population's first language is not English, shows that learning and proficiency in English are a crucial qualification for graduates to enter the competitive global economy or succeed in employment. It is worth mentioning that English has become not only a language of global communication but also an essential working language in all sectors of life throughout the world. Many countries have used it to provide education and training in this foreign language needed for academic use.

Zuparova et al. (2020) believe that English learning and acquisition should be subconscious learning processes, and mistakes which show the learning and acquisition sequence play an essential role at every stage. At present, English can be considered a tool that allows us to come into contact with the outside world, for which globalisation has become an impulse (in terms of language use and currency). English continues to be the most popular language to adopt new words; These words usually appear in different areas of our life, and, as already mentioned, they are well understood by the target group, so it is not necessary to use translation.

Regarding globalisation, Kithinji & Ohirsi (2022) also add that the assumption is made in relation to the fact that a good command of English and the ability to speak, write and read fluently in this language allows the internationalisation of university teaching. The aim of most Ministries of Education that want to achieve bilingualism in Spanish and English, in the case of non-native English speakers, is to apply strategies that promote English learning and acquisition processes.

In the same way, Jaelani & Zabidi (2020) agree that English has become an international language; therefore, it is generally used as a language of communication in some countries where English has become the language of work and business. Therefore, the importance of managing English as a FL or as a L2 becomes undeniable. In this case, the teaching process is not limited to aspects of linguistic competence, but also to global communication, especially in economic terms, where the industries and business activities of the region are critical players in the supply chain and production network.

Besides, it should be emphasised that mastering international language skills allows

the nation to generate more advances in science and technology when a good command and proper use of the language support those advances. English skills are based on three fundamental aspects: pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, which represent the key factors to improve optimal skills and knowledge of the English Language.

One of the most important aspects when people study any specific field should be taken into account their specific needs to learn about that field. Therefore, Zuparova et al. (2020) indicate that the reasons for learning English are different, and it is essential to focus on exactly why students want to learn English, as it is one of the most challenging languages, as shown below:

- English is the most widely used language among foreign speakers worldwide. When people of different languages come together, they often communicate using English.
- Knowing English makes bilingual learners more employable in all countries of the world.
- English is so important that it is the language of science. To excel in science, learners have to know English.
- English is based on an alphabet, and compared to Chinese, it can be learned relatively quickly.
- English is also the language of the film industry; thanks to it, it is no longer necessary to resort to subtitles.

It is also possible to argue that for most students who are part of the Education system in South American countries, such as the case of Ecuador, the need they feel to learn English is that it is compulsory due to the norm established by the government. Students who study higher education careers, different from those who prepare future English teachers, need English to cope with the content in their subject matters, but to a lesser extent, to develop daily communication in the foreign language. Therefore, this is a real need that also should be considered. Students should feel motivated and eager to learn the foreign language, in this case, English,

which is taught in universities around the country.

Another important issue related to the discussion about the need to learn English as a Foreign Language is the level to which students have to be able to use English in and out of classes. This level is achieved through the competences students need to develop. These competences provide students with the possibility to learn the foreign language and use it in close-to-real or real communicative situations.

2.2. English language competence

Competences in English represent the scale of related language knowledge that changes slightly and continuously at each level of learning. In other words, competence is the knowledge a person has about a language (Chomsky, 1965). Later, Canale & Swain (1980) identify the term Communicative competence as a term to include Grammatical competence, Discourse competence, Sociolinguistic competence and Strategic competence.

For Bachman (1990), it is important to consider the communicative language ability model that is formed by:

- Grammatical and sociolinguistic competences

Grammatical and sociolinguistic competences are related in the process of language production, since the grammatical and sociolinguistic components are closely related to formal possibility, acceptability and adequacy in the communication of messages. The temporary and perhaps unconventional use of linguistic and prosodic devices for communication can be considered from this perspective. Similarly, it should be noted that sociolinguistic competence is related to measures that deal with the communicative functions of language, attitudes and ideas in a context.

- Discourse competence

According to Canale & Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990), it is a primary component of Communicative competence. It refers to the competence, from a pedagogical point of view, by means of which a person understands and produces

coherent texts in oral or written form. This kind of competence is also related to the ability to produce cohesive and coherent communication at the text-level in language use.

- Strategic competence

This competence refers to a specific aspect of the student's use of the language; it is related to the student's ability and (limited) knowledge to use the language by means of strategies for communication to take place (Canale, 1983). Verbal and non-verbal strategies should be used to process the language for effective communication. The speakers and the students of a foreign language use some strategies to cope with a lack of knowledge of the target language. They have been identified as compensation strategies, repairing strategies, enhancement/interaction strategies and management for conversation flow. These strategies facilitate learners to cope with communication in the classroom and outside it, even when they are beginner language learners (Bachman, 1990; Council of Europe, 2020a).

2.2.1. English proficiency

In foreign language learning, proficiency is a term that refers to the ability a person has to use the language to be understood and to understand discourse. It means, in English as a foreign language, a person is proficient if she/he is able to use the language with accuracy, fluidity and propriety in situations in which interaction occurs in real life. This traditional definition of proficiency corresponds to Bachman & Palmer (1996), who identified proficiency as one of the main characteristics of English learning.

Chan et al. (2022) note that proficiency in the English language is paramount when teaching students in multilingual environments, where curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment are conducted in English. The inclusion of assessment provides information about the proficiency level of students. The application of assessment has given the possibility to count on standardised tests that provide information on the proficiency level of students.

One of the requirements for students who are at higher education is to have results on a standardised test that gives information on the proficiency level, which depends on the exam taken. When approaching the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) the student gets placed in one of the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 or its equivalent, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), with evaluations focused on discerning the linguistic abilities of candidates who need to study or work where English is used as the language of communication.

Table 1 explains the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages to indicate the scale descriptions of language proficiency levels. It establishes a standardised classification of learners into six levels of proficiency: A1 and A2 (basic users), B1 and B2 (independent users), and C1 and C2 (proficient users).

Table 1 Number of levels according to CEFR for languages.

<i>Common European Framework of Reference for languages</i>	
<i>Proficient</i>	C2
	C1
<i>Independent</i>	B2
	B1
<i>Basic</i>	A2
	A1

This CEFR offers a framework that is appropriate for all kinds of languages that are assessed in the world. It means the exam's results focus on the CEFR descriptions measure, indicating the learner's language level of proficiency, which is internationally recognised. In particular, getting a B2 level of language proficiency shows learners can communicate effectively and efficiently in the language for which they are being assessed.

This framework also integrates general competences, communicative competences

of a linguistic nature, communicative activities, and strategies involved in language use. Apart from that, the descriptors proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) constitute a versatile tool that can be used to formulate learning objectives and design scenarios and teaching tasks (Piccardo, 2014; Piccardo & North, 2019). They also facilitate the monitoring of student progress through different assessment mechanisms, including teacher-led, peer-to-peer, and self-assessment, which, in turn, has a positive impact on student motivation (Frost & O'Donnell, 2015; Piccardo, 2021, p.13).

In Ecuador, higher education Institutions (HEIs) require that learners acquire a foreign language as part of their professional profile. In regard to this, the Consejo de Educación Superior, (CES), (2017, p.17) in Art. 31, on Learning a Foreign Language, declares that "The subjects devoted to learning a foreign language may or may not form part of the curriculum of the degree programme; in any case, the HEI must plan this learning gradually and progressively.

Nonetheless, the HEI shall guarantee the level of language proficiency to meet the graduation requirement for higher technical and technological degrees and their equivalents, and, at the third level, they shall organise or validate the corresponding subjects from the beginning of the degree course. Proficiency in the foreign language must be assessed before the student enrolls in the last ordinary academic period of the respective degree course; such a test will be a qualification for the continuation of their studies, without prejudice to the fact that this requirement may be fulfilled beforehand.

In colleges, technological and equivalent courses, proficiency in a Foreign Language shall be understood as the level corresponding to B1.1 and B1.2, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. For third-level degree courses, proficiency in a foreign language shall mean at least the level corresponding to B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

In order for regular students enrolled in a degree course to meet the requirement of proficiency in a foreign language, higher education institutions may, if they so

require, enter into agreements with other HEIs or institutions. These institutions, although not part of the higher education system, offer language programmes or courses with proof of attendance. It is also provided that they issue certificates of proficiency using internationally recognised examinations.

This proficiency in a language not only depends on the assessment processes applied to students but also on the development of language skills in the path students follow during the learning process of the foreign language. This topic complements the information on the proficiency levels of students when in assessment processes, since language skills are implied in foreign language learning to become proficient in a foreign language.

2.2.2. English Language skills

Considering languages as means of communication and social interaction, it is important to talk about skills that constitute the abilities that show the interaction people develop in communication. Regarding Magyar et al. (2022), a cognitive psychological perspective has dominated research on second language learning and acquisition. Mastering a foreign language presupposes a series of basic skills that allow students to communicate well. The two main categories of skills are known as receptive skills, which include listening and reading. The other category corresponds to productive skills, in which speaking and writing are presented.

Salam et al. (2020) indicate that listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four basic skills of English as an international language. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers integrate them in written and oral expression during the teaching and learning processes in the curriculum of English subjects. Therefore, to be successful in their studies, language students must master all the skills of the English Language.

In EFL, it is important to count on the development of these 4 skills so students achieve the proficiency levels required not only by institutions but also by workplaces where students can be hired once they graduate from their careers.

Terzioğlu & Kurt (2022) argue that language skills improve as participants become motivated and take responsibility for their learning. Similarly, the impact of nowadays materials such as online videos and lesson extracts on the development of students' Foreign Language implies the development of the 4 skills. In the same way, oral sub-skills such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension improve students' confidence in the production of the Foreign Language.

The skills are learned based on different activities, which aim at specifically developing them as a set, in which one or two of them can be emphasised for the purpose of a class. Moreover, the process of skill development and improvement is related to neuromuscular processes, as well as an intellectual one. The skills consist of the ability to send and receive messages that contribute to people's understanding of each other in interactions (Terzioğlu & Kurt, 2022).

Klímová & Toman, (2020) consider language skills essential for all language learners because they are the primary receptors in the process of acquiring information and constructing meaning. However, since students learning English as a foreign language are less exposed to English, they should follow a path until they are able to communicate by means of the use of the 4 skills. Students should be exposed first to listening to the foreign language, and then they can start producing the foreign language in speaking. A later process is introducing students to reading so they can later produce written texts that reinforce and develop their reading skills. Once students surpass the first English as a foreign language class in which skills are introduced and practised, they manage the 4 skills as an integrated set for communication.

It is important to take into account that there is a standard established by the Council of Europe (2020b) when it presents key aspects for teaching and learning a second language. This Council provides information on the desired levels students need to achieve when learning a foreign language so they can develop proficiency. In the following section, the CEFR tables with the description of requirements to achieve the language skills are presented. When teachers apply the descriptors provided in the tables for each level and students achieve the results expected,

students can be assessed by means of standard tests that will locate them in the specific level attained. The tables that follow are the ones taken from the CEFR document published in 2001, which includes the development of receptive and productive skills. The value of these tables is that they are a guide for the government, institutions and teachers to establish the norm and the curricula to comply with the CEFR as a global standard for foreign and second language communication. Receptive skills achievements are described in Table 2.

Table 2 Scale descriptions from CERF to assess the communicative activities of receptive skills.

Reception activities		
Scale	Listening skill	Reading skill
	Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings	Reading as a leisure activity
C2	No descriptors available	Can read virtually all forms of texts, including classical or colloquial literary and non-literary texts in different genres, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.
C1	Can understand a wide range of recorded and broadcast material, including some non-standard usage, and identify finer points of detail, including implicit attitudes and relationships between people.	Can read and appreciate a variety of literary texts, provided they can reread certain sections and that they can access reference tools if they wish. Can read contemporary literary texts and non-fiction produced in the standard form of the language or a familiar variety with little difficulty and with appreciation of implicit meanings and ideas.

B2	Can understand recordings in the standard form of the language likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content. Can understand most documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast material delivered in the standard form of the language and can identify mood, attitude, etc.	Can read for pleasure with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts (e.g. magazines, more straightforward novels, history books, biographies, travelogues, guides, lyrics, poems), using appropriate reference sources selectively. Can read novels with a strong, narrative plot and that use straightforward, unelaborated language, provided they can take their time and use a dictionary.
B1	Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language. Can understand the main points of news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly. Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear.	Can read newspaper/magazine accounts of films, books, concerts, etc., produced for a wider audience and understand the main points. Can understand simple poems and song lyrics, provided these employ straightforward language and style. Can understand descriptions of places, events, explicitly expressed feelings and perspectives in narratives, guides and magazine articles that employ high-frequency everyday language. Can understand a travel diary mainly describing the events of a journey and the experiences and discoveries of the writer. Can follow the plot of stories, simple novels and comics with a clear linear storyline and high frequency everyday language, given regular use of a dictionary.

A2	Can understand the most important information contained in short commercials concerning goods and services of interest (e.g. CDs, video games, travel).	Can understand enough to read short, simple stories and comic strips involving familiar, concrete situations described in high-frequency everyday language.
	Can understand in an interview what people say they do in their free time, what they particularly like doing and what they do not like doing, provided they speak slowly and clearly.	Can understand the main points made in short magazine reports or guide entries that deal with concrete everyday topics (e.g. hobbies, sports, leisure activities, animals).
	Can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters, which are delivered slowly and clearly. Can extract important information from short broadcasts (e.g. the weather forecast, concert announcements, sports results), provided people talk clearly. Can understand the important points of a story and manage to follow the plot, provided the story is told slowly and clearly.	Can understand short narratives and descriptions of someone's life composed in simple language. Can understand what is happening in a photo story (e.g. in a lifestyle magazine) and form an impression of what the characters are like. Can understand much of the information provided in a short description of a person (e.g. a celebrity). Can understand the main point of a short article reporting an event that follows a predictable pattern (e.g. the Oscars), provided it is composed clearly in simple language.
A1	Can pick out concrete information (e.g. places and times) from short recordings on familiar everyday topics, provided they are delivered very slowly and clearly.	Can understand short, illustrated narratives about everyday activities described in simple words. Can understand in outline short texts in illustrated stories, provided the images help them to guess at a lot of the content.

After observing the descriptors for the receptive skills in Table 2 and paying attention to the levels from the CERF, it is possible to understand the descriptors that accompany the development of receptive skills. On one hand, the listening activities address a scale that assesses the learners' understanding of specific details, main ideas and essential facts from recorded materials, from broadcast and media such as messages, narrated stories, interviews, and news bulletins. The

reading activities are aligned for learners to understand creative texts from daily topics with simple descriptions. These texts are also accompanied by illustrations when used in class or for assessment purposes. The narratives used are taken from a variety of texts about places and people, so students can practice the language in close to real situations of communication.

For productive skills, the CERF also provides the descriptors in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Scale descriptions from CERF to assess the communicative activities of productive skills.

Production activities		
Scale	Speaking skill	Writing skill
	Sustained monologue: describing experience	Creative writing
C2	Can give clear, smoothly flowing, elaborate and often memorable descriptions.	Can relate clear, smoothly flowing and engaging stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted. Can exploit idiom and humour appropriately to enhance the impact of the text.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects. Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding them off with an appropriate conclusion.	Can produce clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind. Can incorporate idiom and humour, though use of the latter is not always appropriate. Can give a detailed critical review of cultural events (e.g. plays, films, concerts) or literary works

B2	Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest. Can describe the personal significance of events and experiences in detail.	Can give clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences, marking the relationship between ideas in clear, connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned. Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest. Can give a review of a film, book or play.
B1	Can clearly express feelings about something experienced and give reasons to explain those feelings. Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within their field of interest. Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a sequence of points. Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions. Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g. an accident. Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe their reactions. Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions. Can describe events, real or imagined. Can narrate a story.	Can clearly signal chronological sequence in narrative text. Can give a simple review of a film, book or TV programme using a limited range of language. Can give straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest. Can give accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple, connected text. Can give a description of an event, a recent trip – real or imagined. Can narrate a story.

A2	Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.	Can describe everyday aspects of their environment, e.g. people, places, a job or study experience, in linked sentences.
	Can describe everyday aspects of their environment, e.g. people, places, a job or study experience.	Can give very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.
	Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities.	Can tell a simple story (e.g. about events on a holiday or about life in the distant future).
	Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences.	Can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background, or present or most recent job.
	Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions.	Can create short, simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.
	Can explain what they like or dislike about something.	Can create diary entries that describe activities (e.g. daily routine, outings, sports, hobbies), people and places, using basic, concrete vocabulary and simple phrases and sentences with simple connectives like “and”, “but” and “because”.
	Can describe their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job.	
	Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms.	Can compose an introduction to a story or continue a story, provided they can consult a dictionary and references (e.g. tables of verb tenses in a course book).
	Can express what they are good at and not so good at (e.g. sports, games, skills, subjects).	
	Can briefly describe what they plan to do at the weekend or during the holidays.	
A1	Can describe themselves, what they do and where they live.	Can produce simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.
	Can describe simple aspects of their everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words/signs and basic phrases, provided they can prepare in advance.	Can describe in very simple language what a room looks like.
		Can use simple words/signs and phrases to describe certain

everyday objects (e.g. the colour of a car, whether it is big or small).

Table 3 details the scale of both productive skills for communicative language competences, which addresses the learners' language cognitive level based on their performance results. In oral production, learners narrate experiences and give descriptions of everyday activities. In contrast, in written productions, learners describe aspects such as basic daily information through texts that include experiences, appealing stories and imaginary biographies, among others.

Authors such as Widdowson (1978) started working on communication in EFL based on the distinction between receptive and productive skills. Widdowson (1978) goes on to identify this distinction in reference to forms of communication, which to some extent express the difference in the communicative function developed by means of the four skills in language learning and use. This distinction classifies reading and listening as receptive skills, and speaking and writing as productive ones, just as they appear in the tables provided by the CERF. The following section presents the four skills in their classification as receptive and productive ones.

2.1.2.1. Reading and listening

According to Magyar et al. (2022), reading and listening are essential receptive skills that provide language learners with information. In language learning, students acquire receptive skills and then develop productive skills. Subsequently, the two are included and play a fundamental role in enhancing other skills. However, listening skills are less practical for students than written text since there is no way to reproduce information several times. This does not mean that the reader or listener is simply a passive interactionist.

Reading

Based on Farrah & Al-Bakry (2020), reading is the receptive skill of language in

which students are also developing reading comprehension. Here, the main objective is reading texts and understanding their main ideas. Hence, reading comprehension is an active thought process that draws on students' prior knowledge to understand words, concepts, and expressions in order to access the main ideas of the text.

Farrah and Al-Bakry (2020) also describe reading comprehension as a meta-cognitive process underlying readers' prior experience. It is important to consider that reading words and understanding the text's whole meaning is not enough for comprehension. It is essential to combine different thinking skills with speech and text to decipher the key messages behind them and construct accurate meaning.

Reading comprehension relies on syntactic parsing or identifying sentence components and understanding their relationships. Knowledge of grammar provides a mental framework for the analysis of sentence structure and logic during reading. Learners can make use of online grammar learning to enhance syntactic accuracy, complexity, and variety in writing tasks (Wang et al., 2024).

Since the receptive skills in foreign language learning are the ones that provide students the opportunity to come into contact with the language and familiarise themselves with it, not only is reading important. The other receptive skill is listening. By means of listening, students get the foreign language from oral sources.

Listening

Magyar et al. (2022) mention that listening is considered an active process because it involves the active participation of listeners to understand and make sense of what is said and requires a variety of skills to understand what others say; it also includes the recognition of the sound pronounced by the speaker, perception of intonation patterns, interpretation of the gist of what is said, understanding vocabulary and grammatical patterns, and placing information in context. Listening is considered the dominant skill, strongly correlated with all other language proficiency skills, and is related to reading comprehension in a foreign Language in the sense that both are characterised as receptive ones.

Similarly, the effect of EFL on language proficiency in reading and listening comprehension is mentioned as a very important characteristic of these receptive skills. Magyar et al. (2022) concluded that there is a significant relationship between the sub-tasks of reading comprehension and listening comprehension and the integration of the two skills.

Amini et al. (2020) also indicate that reading and listening skills are essential for students' success because they allow them to improve their language and communication skills. Students learning English as a Second Language (ESL) or as a Foreign Language (EFL) need to read and listen to a lot of information in the foreign language to become proficient in English. As well, reading and listening are also important for communication in everyday life because they allow students to access and practice new information in real interactions.

Higher education institutions consider reading one of the academic skills students need to practice the most. In schools, ESL/EFL students are expected to read and understand academically relevant texts to have enough information to pass exams. Still, many have difficulty comprehending the content of classes or textbooks. Reading fluently is a complex process of comprehending a text and understanding its meaning, requiring not only the development of reading but also the inclusion of mental processes in which the brain plays a role.

Mera Velásquez et al. (2023) emphasise that it is essential to recognise the significance of analysing a reading corpus across all courses, particularly when acquiring English for specific purposes (ESP) at the university level. For instance, mastering medical terminology is crucial for a clear understanding of complex texts, research articles, books, and more. This necessity arises from the learners' limited experience in employing effective metacognitive and cognitive reading strategies. In light of this perspective, educators must undergo thorough training to effectively guide learners in developing robust reading comprehension skills.

Besides, Amini et al. (2020) argue that reading strategies can be one of the important factors influencing students' learning outcomes, since the inability to understand a text due to the inability to choose appropriate comprehension

approaches can lead to problems of understanding. Similarly, if students use appropriate strategies to answer comprehension questions, they are more likely to become independent readers.

Saleem Khasawneh (2021) argues that one of the leading learning difficulties is related to reading in English. The low effectiveness of a training program based on attention strategies and working memory to improve reading competence among students makes them experience difficulties in learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, professors should pay attention not only to listening as a receptive skill but also to reading additional activities. It is important to develop learning strategies that focus not only on working memory but also provide the basis for additional out-of-class work. If students are equipped with these tools, they will be able to practice and learn the foreign language on their own. In this way, they will become autonomous in their learning process.

Students also need help acquiring the necessary reading comprehension sub-skills, such as rapid word recognition and a rich vocabulary. It is important to identify the deficits and weaknesses of students when reading in English. It is one of the challenges researchers face in teaching and learning processes of English in general.

Conversely, Jaelani & Zabidi (2020) consider listening competence a complex process since it requires the listener to develop skills for distinguishing sounds and comprehension of vocabulary and grammatical structures with a wide interpretation. Therefore, the ability to speak fluently is based not only on knowledge of the properties of the language but also on the ability to process information and language, for which a process of self-reflection must be applied to demonstrate the degree of effectiveness and quality improvement of student learning.

Following the skills considered the main components of Foreign Language learning, another set of essential skills in developing English proficiency are listening and speaking. These two skills work together as a unit in the teaching of second and foreign languages.

2.1.2.2. Listening and speaking

Farrah and Al-Bakry (2020) argue that listening and speaking skills are inseparable, and before measuring communication skills, students need to learn the language and become familiar with different listening patterns. It should also be noted that grammar is another constituent part of a language and, therefore, of language communication and skill improvement.

These two linguistic components in a language are essential to communicate and to use the language in real-life interactions. It is important to take into account that all of the linguistic components of English need to be introduced in communicative classes so students become fluent listeners and speakers. The different second and foreign language teaching and learning methods have developed activities for students to practice during class time to improve their language use. Some examples of speaking activities that form part of a set to develop the speaking skill can be mentioned. According to Bobojonova (2020), the activities below have proven to be successful in students' development of speaking:

- *Drama*

This activity consists of a dialogue between two or more students in the classroom. In this activity, students are asked to record a dialogue as if it were a play, and the teacher gives students time to prepare until all groups are ready. Once the recording is finished, the teacher makes the appropriate comments. This activity is exciting and helpful in developing oral expression and encourages students to use the language in real life.

- *Questions and answers*

The question-and-answer activity is also used in the teaching of oral expression. Asking questions is one of the widely used activities by teachers. In some classes, more than half of the class time is dedicated to exchanging questions and answers.

- *Narration*

It consists of storytelling, where students can briefly summarise a tale or story they have heard from someone before or create their own stories to tell their classmates. Storytelling encourages creative thinking. It also helps students to express ideas in a beginning, middle, and end format, including the characters and the setting a story should have.

Another very important skill is constituted by writing. This skill is suggested as the last stage in the training of skills for students who learn English as a FL. After students have developed listening, speaking, and reading, students can be faced with the task of writing.

2.1.2.3. Writing

According to Farrah & Al-Bakry (2020), writing is considered one of the most challenging skills for students. They point out that writing is inherently more complex than other skills. Furthermore, as a result, students feel demotivated and have a negative attitude towards acquiring this skill. As a consequence, the integration of technology in the classroom can be a solution to this problem. The use of technology for the development of writing skills can create an exciting environment in which students systematically learn the writing process at different stages of their FLL.

In addition, Chen (2022) points out that the ability to communicate in English is also an essential part of students' language skills. When students achieve a level of communication, it means they are able to manage the four language skills. Students not only communicate when they express by means of oral language, but also when they express their ideas by means of written language. It is also argued that when students understand oral language, it is because they receive some kind of input from the outside, and when students communicate with others, they send an output in the form of the language they have internalised. It is very much observable when students exercise the writing process in a foreign language. From a multidisciplinary perspective, the difference between language input and output in students' writing in English provides information on the level of writing they have.

There are many different activities to provide students with the opportunity to develop writing skills. From the beginning stages to the advanced ones, students need to practice writing in such a way that they not only know the mechanics of writing but also feel motivated to write in the foreign language. The development of motivation at lower stages of English learning is easier to achieve since variety is possible to be provided during class time. When students get to more advanced stages, it seems professors run out of motivating activities to be developed with students in class and for students to apply in tasks out of class. One of those advanced activities to use with higher education students is presented by Feijóo Rojas et al. (2020).

According to Feijóo Rojas et al. (2020), employing a digital portfolio strategy to enhance writing skills may initially pose challenges for students due to their limited experience. However, the responsibility is on the teacher to undertake the demanding strategic planning task, encompassing the delineation of objectives, instructional content, and evaluation criteria. These components must be anchored in well-defined and attainable goals. Furthermore, a crucial teacher responsibility involves continuous monitoring of the teaching and learning processes and motivating students throughout each task.

When working with writing, it is important to consider that this skill embraces several competences and abilities, which include "organisation, coherence, sentence structure, grammar, and vocabulary" (Emran et al., 2024, p.1). Correspondingly, vocabulary is an integral part of language and plays a vital role in language acquisition, especially when writing is at stake. Farrah & Al-Bakry (2020) emphasise that learning vocabulary is very important for language learning because it allows language learners to improve their communication skills, not only oral ones but also the written expression, which is a very important kind of communication in language. When students are faced with the learning process of a foreign language, the knowledge of vocabulary becomes a subskill that forms part of each main skill. Without the command of vocabulary, communication is at risk.

For Castro-García (2020), vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental aspect of language learning. Vocabulary learning can be considered one of the first tasks

students face when they start learning a language; therefore, increasing their knowledge of the target language increases their vocabulary and vice versa. Likewise, a speaker's vocabulary is the aspect of the language that changes and develops the most throughout their life.

Castro-García (2020) also adds that although, for some students, the amount of vocabulary of native speakers may seem unattainable, vocabulary acquisition remains a crucial aspect of learning a second Language. Learners will significantly benefit from this learning, and their general language skills will be greatly improved. Similarly, it should be noted that vocabulary is essential for students to develop the basic skills necessary to use the language in communication.

Castro-García (2020) argues that knowledge of the vocabulary is used when the language is produced in speaking or writing in the second language. Likewise, it allows progress from the receptive capacity to the productive one. Therefore, the receptive vocabulary is usually more significant than the productive one. Inventing word forms at the productive level is more cognitively demanding than recognising words at the receptive level. Vocabulary knowledge requires more direct attention because productive vocabulary use demands from the students a greater effort to retain and use.

Two motivating activities that can be used to practice the writing skill are writer's career and write Karaoke:

- *Writer's career*

It is a simple activity that requires very few resources. It makes writing active and exciting for even the youngest learners and allows them to write on the board, which all the learners seem to like.

- *Write karaoke*

It is a fun activity to interrupt a lesson or end class on a high note. It can be played with a class of any size, and students can play from their desks. It is ideal for elementary school teens to practice writing and listening, but it is also a great

activity to entertain teens and adults. Learners need pens, pencils, paper, a projector, and a whiteboard for this activity.

Last but not least, when talking about the development of skills, it is important to consider the point of view of Schleppegrell (2004), who discusses the importance of paralinguistic features in language learning. It is important to develop aspects related to discourse features such as tone, pauses, gestures in oral skills, formatting, punctuation, and visual cues in writing, which should be worked on alongside the development of reading and writing skills implied in Foreign Language education. These features can be practised with students when communication in the L2 is exercised. Language skill practice should be accompanied by features such as gestures when speaking or commas and periods when writing. In this way, proficiency in the language studied is developed. As students go from the different levels of language knowledge, they achieve proficiency in the L2 by means of managing the set of the 4 language skills in close to real communication situations that the teacher can create during the foreign language classes.

In relation to proficiency in FLL, to happen, Ismail & Dedi (2021) argue in favour of grammar as a fundamental part of any language. Grammar is a key aspect that must be comprehended in order to understand the language well. Since grammar uses the basic rules of the language, it can make learning easier. Teaching grammar is equally important; without a good knowledge of grammar, the development of students' language skills will be limited. Sometimes, it is a fact that to some stage students can use the language to communicate with other people without having an excellent knowledge of grammar, but it is also a fact that it happens during the interlanguage stages the students go through when learning a foreign language (Tarone, 2018).

Grammar is such an important component of language that when students do not have the basis of this knowledge, communication can be developed, but this communication can be imprecise and incoherent. What provides a context that promotes comprehension during these interlanguage stages is the use of paralinguistic features, such as gestures, and communication strategies students use, such as paraphrasing. Nevertheless, this aspect makes it possible for

misunderstandings in communication of any kind, oral or written. In the same way, it will be difficult for learners to understand complex forms of the language, both written and spoken. Mastery of grammar is, therefore, crucial for correctly understanding and using the language, especially in academic contexts.

To help students solve the problems of FL communication, it is needed to introduce the explanation of grammar rules, for instance. Sometimes, students have difficulty applying rules that have been intensively taught in class. Therefore, it is the task of teachers to emphasise the practice of those forms of the language in such a way that students become fluent in the management of language in communication (Larsen-Freema, 2003).

Vocabulary and grammar, as important components of the skills people use for communication in a language, should be included in the teaching process by professors. Students should be faced with these components in a variety of motivating activities that awaken the learning process of students. During the learning process, students are faced with strategies, they can apply to make their learning easier. Learning strategies help students assimilate the content they get in class or the input they receive from the context in which they learn. Language learning strategies complement the teaching and learning process of EFL learning in and out of class. The strategies students apply during their learning time help them process the language they need to communicate and develop specific tasks in EFL.

3. LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND THE SKILLS

Language learning strategies are ideas, complex acts and dynamics chosen by students and used with some degree of awareness to control many aspects of errors in certain situations of communication or linguistic use. These strategies help students develop self-learning in the long term. According to Magyar et al. (2022), language learning strategies can follow a model usually established by research on the topic. Strategies in foreign languages happen in students' learning process in every skill they practice and for every topic they need to learn.

Ismail & Dedi (2021) refer to, for example, grammar learning strategies as activities and ideas that students consciously use to make learning and using the language more straightforward, effective, efficient and enjoyable. Grammar learning strategies is the most recent field in which learning strategy research is developed. It requires further research to determine its contribution to language teaching and learning. In addition, teaching the learning strategies students use will be more effective if integrated into the learning process.

Considering that students apply strategies for learning in every skill development task, a set of strategies has been provided that students can use. For instance, it is possible to identify the following strategies in reading tasks.

- Cognitive strategies directly interact with the written text and facilitate comprehension. They involve making inferences from context and summarising (Oxford, 2016).
- Meta-cognitive strategies include monitoring, planning, and evaluation, which can be done during any development course (Oxford, 2016).
- Social-emotional strategies mediate social activities and transactions with others, such as checks for understanding and requests for clarification (Oxford, 2016).
- Global strategies monitor reading, predict, preview, scan, and skim the text

(Habók et al., 2022).

- Problem-solving strategies facilitate reading complicated texts, including guessing, visualising, and reading slowly (Oxford, 2016).
- Supportive Reading Strategies (SUP) help readers improve their text comprehension (Le-Thi et al., 2022).

In addition, it is worth mentioning reading strategies that can have a specific place in the class sequence of activities, which means some can happen before, during and after the reading process takes place. These strategies are used for students to manage the anticipation of meaningful activities in which they try to discover the possible meaning of the text before reading it. On other occasions, they can examine the text while reading. These strategies can also be developed by constantly monitoring their comprehension and channelling their knowledge into experiences, ideas and thoughts after reading, to broaden the comprehension of the text. Magyar et al. (2022) argue that the attitude towards the English language directly influences the reading strategies students decide to use in specific tasks.

Furthermore, Amini et al. (2020) add that strategies play an essential role in helping students plan and monitor their comprehension as they read; students who use reading strategies when answering comprehension questions are more engaged in their learning. In addition to improving reading comprehension, reading strategies are essential for students to understand the contents of a reading. When students are faced with strategies to use in reading, they can usually be identified as good readers or poor readers. Poor readers can benefit from the experience of good readers when using strategies. They can rapidly improve reading comprehension at different segmental levels because they require readers to understand the connections between the ideas of a passage (Amini et al., 2020).

One important aspect to consider when working in reading is the differentiation of strategy and skill. This difference represents a significant and noticeable contribution to the EFL academic field. On one hand, it is important to consider that the reading process deals with the ability to understand the meaning of printed sources and to decipher information adequately, which implies the interaction

between readers and the text. In contrast, the product of reading refers to text comprehension, which implies the reading comprehension process. From the differentiation in the reading processes above, some clarification is established between what a skill and a strategy are when reading is at stake. Amini et al. (2020) include the following differentiation, which represents an elucidation for teachers to remember when reading is to be worked on:

- Strategies are reader-oriented. The skills are text-oriented.
- Strategies are conscious choices of the reader. Skills are applied subconsciously.
- Strategies represent a response to a problem. A skill is an automatic ability that works mostly unconsciously, while a strategy is a conscious procedure to solve a problem. "General strategies" refer to building and monitoring understanding, while "local strategies" are efforts to understand particular language units (Amini et al., 2020).

In the same order of ideas, it is worth mentioning that in terms of reading comprehension strategies among English students in tertiary institutions, it was identified that the reading strategies students used the most reading were logical knowledge (in the linguistic scheme), formal construction (in the formal schema), cultural knowledge (in the cultural schema), prior knowledge, and conceptual knowledge (in the content schema) (Van & Thuy, 2020).

In the same way as reading has been matched with some strategies that facilitate students' learning of English, the other three skills have been assigned the strategies that best apply in each case. Listening, a receptive skill, includes, in this case, a typology of strategies such as the ones provided below.

In the process, students develop when listening exercises are provided as input to learning and acquiring the foreign language. Magyar et al. (2022) sorted out three typologies:

- Cognitive strategies, essential for listening comprehension, help students monitor and control mental processes, thus improving mental abilities and dependent cognitive processes.

- Metacognitive strategies that allow thinking about mental processes and learning methods. They are essential in helping students to direct and monitor the plan for studying and planning sequences of study. At the same time, students can monitor and interpret the specific thought process while listening (Shaojie et al., 2024). Learners can get key data and solve listening problems.
- Socio-emotional listening strategies allow interaction with peers and make it easier for listeners to eliminate negative emotions such as anxiety.

Once the components of language use and language learning were presented, it is important to focus on the Language learning process. In this case, the emphasis is on the Foreign Language Learning of English.

3.1. Language learning process

Jaelani & Zabidi (2020) emphasise the important role of English in teaching and learning. The learning process should include adequate means to improve students' English knowledge through learning activities that are convenient, fun and attractive. Multiple factors are involved in the learning process, and not all individuals can overcome the challenges posed by learning activities.

In addition, it is worth mentioning the importance of linguistic skills and the factors that influence the evaluation of competences, such as performance in class, attitudes towards oral expression in English, the tasks carried out and the topics transmitted by teachers. As a matter of fact, many students do not understand the sentences pronounced in English by their interlocutors. It translates into the scarcity and limitation of vocabulary in the command of the second language, which means that oral expression is closely related to learning (Jaelani & Zabidi, 2020).

For the transition of language learning and teaching processes from a form-based to a meaningful approach, a shift from a rigid to an eclectic approach, from teacher-directed to classroom-mediated learners, which is the trend in EFL nowadays, teachers and students need to be motivated to benefit from learning to take place. To achieve this, it is worth highlighting important aspects of communication. Let

us consider the following factors (Magyar et al., 2022).

- Communicative competence: It is the ability not only to apply the rules of grammatical language to the correct grammatical sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences, that is, to use them correctly. Many programs deal with "communicative activity", and each program claims that it can achieve the objective of the approach, in relation to communicative competence.
- Communicative Approach: It is based on information gaps in communicative language learning. An information gap occurs when one person knows something that others do not.
- Interval information: This information is introduced in schools using the following activities: language games which have three characteristics: information gap, choice and feedback; mindfulness which is based on complex cognition, in which the student learns best since his/her mind is focused on carrying out the tasks and not on the language itself; text rearrangement which consists in the use of sentence extraction and image extraction techniques, use of concepts, anaphoric pronouns and semantic clues. Additionally, it is important to consider the class management techniques, such as group and pair work, as an integral part of any communicative activity.

Regarding Mantra et al. (2022), learning is a process of interaction between students and their environment, aiming to develop better life behaviours. To develop students' knowledge, teachers play a fundamental role in maintaining students' engagement with learning, in which teachers are in charge of coordinating students' learning environment to promote changes in their learning behaviour and improve their lives. Therefore, it can be said that learning is a conscious effort by teachers to help students internalise what they plan to teach according to students' interests and needs.

In this sense, Mantra et al. (2022) state that teachers should always facilitate the

learning process, creating and fostering situations that improve students' comprehension and acquisition of the foreign language. In addition, it can be said that learning is one factor that influences and plays a vital role in shaping individual behaviour to improve living conditions. Likewise, the learning process is also an invisible mental activity, which means that the change process in the human mind cannot be seen.

Only the symptoms of behaviour change are visible. Therefore, learning is usually understood as an activity that leads to a change in behaviour. In this sense, learning can be understood as an activity in which the teacher changes students' behaviour to improve their lives. Language learning, in particular, has its specificities since it involves acquiring different types of knowledge in a communicative process in which language learning becomes very broad and complex.

Other learning strategies in the classroom must be fully understood and practised since this will allow teachers to see the need for changes in the language learning process that require a route of self-development and the development of the potential of the students in a holistic way through the learning process implemented by each teacher in the classroom. Likewise, recognising the phenomenon of the changing educational paradigm that considers the human being as a total resource provides basic guidelines for the design of future academic development. (Mantra et al., 2022).

Additionally, Atmowardoyo et al. (2021) emphasise that the main learning characteristics that make a positive plan in learning foreign languages include a) an active plan, b) formal education, c) social learning, and d) emotional strategies. However, it is also argued that students often feel inhibited by the fear of making mistakes. In addition, it is emphasised that language learning strategies and motivation affect the subject's ability to learn English as a foreign language.

For any kind of learning to occur, some paradigms have existed and have been developed under psychological theories. These paradigms should be considered to understand the learning process that occurs in FLL.

3.1.1. Learning paradigms

Regarding Radianti et al. (2020, pp.3-4) The main ideas underlying existing learning paradigms are based on the following elements:

- Behaviourism assumes knowledge is a repertoire of behavioural responses to environmental stimuli. Therefore, learning is considered the passive acquisition of predefined knowledge by the student; based on this paradigm, it was evidenced that learning requires repetition, the motivation to learn is extrinsic, including positive and negative reinforcement, and that teachers act as role models mediating appropriate behavioural responses.
- Cognitivism holds that the learner's acquisition of knowledge systems is an active construction based on existing knowledge structures. Thus, supporters of cognitivism view learning as an active, constructive, and purposeful process of actively acquiring new information and adapting it to existing knowledge structures. The motivation to learn is intrinsic, and students must be able to set their own goals and motivate themselves to learn. Learning is facilitated by an environment that supports knowledge discovery and acquisition or adaptation.

Cognitivism views learning as a more complex cognitive process involving thinking, problem-solving, verbal information, concept formation, and information processing. It deals with how the mind receives, organises, stores, and retrieves information. The acquisition of knowledge is a mental activity that implies internal coding and structuring by the student; digital environments, including VR-based teaching, can enhance cognitive instructional design.

Cognitive strategies such as diagrammatic organisation, analogy, and algorithmic problem-solving are suitable for learning tasks that require higher-order processing, such as classification and execution of rules and procedures, and are supported by digital environments.

- Constructivism assumes that learning is an active and constructive process. Students act as constructors of information, actively building subjective

representations and understandings of reality. The new information is related to the previous knowledge of each student, and therefore, the mental representations are subjective. Constructivists argue that pedagogical learning projects must provide macro and micro supports that allow students to build knowledge and participate in meaningful learning.

Macro support tools include relevant examples, information resources, cognitive tools, discussion, collaboration tools, and social and contextual support. Micro-strategies use multimedia and principles such as spatial continuity, coherence, modality, and redundancy to enhance learning; VR-based learning is compatible with constructivist learning models.

Constructivist strategies, such as situated learning, cognitive learning, and social negotiation, are suitable for learning tasks that require advanced processing, such as heuristic problem-solving, individual choice, and observation of cognitive strategies.

- Experimentalism describes learning as a cycle of experiential stages: from concrete experience, through observation, reflection, and abstract conceptualisation, to testing concepts in new situations. It adopts a somewhat constructivist point of view, and the teacher assumes the role of a facilitator who motivates students through the different stages of the learning cycle.
- Connectivism considers the digital age and considers that people process information by establishing connections. This new paradigm maintains that people do not stop learning once they finish their formal education. They continue to seek and acquire knowledge outside traditional channels of education.

3.1.2. Strategies for Foreign Language Learning

Based on Mantra et al. (2022), the development of language learning in this century has been marked by general principles and theories about how a language is learned, both in the classroom and in the natural environment, which will underpin the future evolution of language learning in terms of theory, approach, methods, strategies and

other issues related to language learning.

In addition, there is a need to train language teachers to teach and apply cooperative learning in the classroom professionally. A textbook can be a source of meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies. Awareness of these two learning strategies can lead to successful results in learning English.

According to Žindžiuvienė (2019), “meta-cognitive and socio-affective learning strategies can be integrated in activities such as listening, reading, speaking, writing, vocabulary training, grammar and pronunciation. Development of these two types of strategies can help students to form better learning habits for life-long learning and to become socially competent, culturally aware and emotionally intelligent” (p.489). Definitely, what Žindžiuvienė (2019) argues is that strategies form part of the 4 skills and their component sub-skills, as well as the whole learning process of students.

While strategic learning allows the strategies to be practised, it has a clear and appropriate purpose for achieving the learning objective or competence; it facilitates meaningful learning and allows the development of skills and abilities that contextualise the process, interpret what has been learnt, promote interaction and encourage students’ self-regulation.

Magyar et al. (2022) highlight the importance of memorisation strategies that allow new information to be stored in memory without further processing. However, they do not produce a deep understanding since they do not help develop the student's ability to deduce stored information underlying meaning and message to integrate new knowledge and prior assumptions.

Camizán García et al. (2021) say that learning strategies are defined in the context of decision-making due to learners select and activate the knowledge they need to meet their professional and personal needs in the learning situation. Another point to consider is that learning strategies are important because they involve students' cognitive resources when learning.

Therefore, according to learning strategies, acquisition strategies should be

considered through attentional processes for selecting, transforming and transferring information from the environment to the sensory register. The primary way to capture or acquire information is through attention. In most cases, attention initiates an iterative process transferring and transforming information from the sensory register to short-term memory and from short-term memory to long-term memory, interacting with the attention process (Camizán García et al., 2021).

Moreover, Camizán García et al. (2021) argue that retrieval strategies should be considered within the learning strategies. Students can use retrieval strategies when the aim is to recover information from memory and generate responses. Thus, cognitive systems are based on the ability to retrieve or recall knowledge stored in long-term memory. This measure identifies and evaluates to what extent strategies are preferred to retrieve information from memory and generate responses using retrieval and/or response generation Systems. Furthermore, it is important to consider that supporting strategies should be considered. These strategies maintain, help, and improve the effectiveness of acquisition, coding, and retrieval by enhancing motivation, self-efficacy, attention, and the environment for learning.

Ahmad Ghulamuddin et al. (2022) also consider education that is not face-to-face and indicate that learning strategies during online distance education (ODL) represent an essential factor in guaranteeing a smooth academic process. During the pandemic, the strategies replaced the traditional face-to-face interaction between students and teachers. Similarly, ODL is a process of distance learning via the Internet in an academic context, which offers students as much control as possible over the time, place and pace of learning. Ahmad Ghulamuddin et al. (2022) interpret online learning as the education that involves the transfer of instruction and content via the Internet, and pay attention to communication between learners and instructors.

Another point to highlight is that learning strategies during online distance education (ODL) are communication tools for teaching and learning that integrate telecommunication technologies. These technologies improve distance teaching and learning processes since students can increase their comprehension and academic performance. During distance learning, students resort to self-study by

means of consulting teachers, discussing with friends and seeking other sources of information to complete set tasks instead of asking questions or participating in direct discussions.

3.1.3 Technology as part of learning strategies

Nowadays, a more subtle strategy students can use to facilitate their learning process in EFL is constituted by the use of technology in their daily and academic life. Escamilla-Martínez & Muriel-Amezcu (2021) describe that the technological elements underpin online learning and underscore the critical role of technology both in this conceptually fuzzy system and in aspects of distributed learning systems. These systems can be described as either classrooms or virtual classrooms, online and offline learning, self-directed, collaborative learning and face-to-face activities; structured and unstructured activities, adapted and unstructured content, practice and capacity Building.

Montes & Nuñez (2021) consider, for instance, that mobile learning is a new form of learning that corresponds to the integration of e-learning through the use of smart devices (PDAs, smartphones, iPods, pocket PCs, 3G mobile phones, and consoles). These devices allow a combination of face-to-face and virtual subjects to learn, facilitating the process and allowing them to search for ideas, contacts and exchange information when they want or need to clarify their knowledge, and ask for advice, among others.

Van and Thuy (2020) explain that Mobile learning (M-learning) is how a person learns something using mobile computing devices like Palms, Windows CE machines, and even digital mobile phones. Mobile learning means the application of mobile technology and the viability of mobile education in a rapidly evolving society in terms of technology. That is, when the student is not in a fixed and predetermined place, or when the student takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technology.

Likewise, mobile learning to learn English has become ubiquitous in human life

due to its multiple capabilities that transcend the limitations of time and space. In particular, it is a valuable and brilliant invention in education worldwide, and it also allows taking advantage of the unique capabilities of mobile technology. This kind of learning offers advantages that other types of distance education cannot offer. Students can entirely rely on mobile learning for their English learning (Van and Thuy, 2020).

The learning in MALL background implies learning materials triggered in these two features: (1) the learning materials should be short and concise to meet the requirements of the mobile learning terminal; (2) the learning materials should be practical and refined to meet the actual learning purpose of learners to solve problems. In addition to this, the mobility of foreign language learners and the mobility of handheld devices have contributed to mobile learning in the language subject area (Shaojie et al., 2024, p.3). Different learning possibilities have been developed by means of online technological devices such as gamification, AI-powered tools, digital platforms, and Learning Management systems.

Amaya & Bajiña (2023) propose gamification as a multimedia learning strategy that makes learners build autonomous learning and self-correction with low pressure. It shows a well-organised learning process that identifies the learner's progress, in which they can also perform the learning activities at their own speed. It also promotes language learning and improves learners' participation in class. Thus, it is essential to apply this strategy correctly to achieve effective learning and create a classroom with dynamic digital learning contexts.

When talking about technology as a strategy for FLL, it is also important to consider what Atmowardoyo et al. (2021) mention. They argue that learners already use electronic media to improve their language skills. The technological developments that exist today have their benefits. E-learning can motivate and inspire students to learn English, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

To impact FLL in ESP students, it is also interesting to note that strategies of the kind that make students think about their own learning process can be considered. They are identified as Metacognitive ones.

3.1.2.1 Metacognitive Strategies in FLL

From the perspective of Hayat et al. (2020), the impact of metacognitive learning strategies on learning outcomes should be observed and analysed in each teaching context since they have provided good FLL results. Metacognitive strategies, for example, are a vital component of self-regulated learning because they allow students to plan, monitor, and regulate their cognition. Students who use metacognitive learning strategies formulate better learning plans, monitor and assess their learning and perceptions of material more effectively. They are more accountable, recognise and solve problems, and engage in deeper learning. Therefore, metacognitive strategies play an essential role in academic success.

There is another group of strategies that should be considered in FLL. These are known as Social-affective strategies and are related to work on the affective filter of students to help their learning process be as smooth as possible.

3.1.2.2. Social-affective strategies

Robiansyah & Rochmahwati (2020) emphasise that social-affective strategies boost the development of the learner's self-confidence, trust and motivation in their abilities when they have to perform in class activities in any of the skills. They also indicate that motivation plays a fundamental role in making learners learn successfully; otherwise, they can avoid achieving their goals despite showing outstanding skills.

Since the social and affective components in a person are important in any aspect of people's lives, it is necessary to mention that if these strategies are not considered in FLL classrooms, the development of FL skills can be a real frustration for students. The social-affective strategies provide learners with a component in which they share the L2 with their peers, and therefore, these strategies can help them to improve, for instance, their speaking skills. Activities such as asking questions for clarification and correction, cooperating with others to practice their English proficiency, emphasising others or peers, encouraging themselves by giving awards for their efforts, minimising their anxiety and monitoring their

emotions provide information on socio-affective strategies.

Kong et al. (2021) highlight that foreign language learning strategies are complex and dynamic communicative activities in which social affective strategies can be observed. They involve actions that learners consciously select and use in specific contexts to regulate different aspects of their performance in order to: a) complete language learning tasks, b) improve competence in linguistics or language use, and/or c) improve skills over time. The strategies are based on thought but can have observable physical manifestations, for example, socio-affective strategies manifest in oral activities of students, in written essays they develop, in reading texts they select in accordance with their likes and in listening tasks in which they select the topics they are interested in knowing about.

Based on Ahmad Ghulamuddin et al. (2022), learning strategies from the group of social-affective ones can accelerate learning development as unique perspectives or practices that individuals use to manage and help understand, learn or retain newly discovered information in situations that are close to real in the culture of the L2. Learning strategies can also be represented by actions that students carry out to improve their language learning. Therefore, LLS are language learning behaviours that students use during the language learning process. These behaviours manifest thanks to the level of motivation students exert in classroom settings.

In accordance with Escobar & Silva (2020), motivation is a fundamental and complex psychological process in all human beings. It is associated with the nervous system, cognitive processing, emotional regulation, stable personality traits, and learning to satisfy desires. Motivation is sometimes taken as a pressure that stimulates, encourages, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviour. It focuses on integrating and regulating particular motives to achieve more adaptive behaviour, focusing on ideas, values , and goals in the social context.

Motivation, as part of this socio-affective component of FLL strategies, is divided into two kinds: intrinsic and extrinsic, which are worth mentioning here. Intrinsic motivation is a model of autonomy, while extrinsic motivation interacts with variables and dimensions defined by the psychological and social context. There

are four types of extrinsic motivation: (1) extrinsic regulation, which is essentially controlled by environmental conditions; (2) intrinsic regulation, in which individuals primarily internalize conditions; (3) identification regulation, in which individuals recognize the importance of the activity; and (4) integration regulation, in which individuals act according to their own needs and beliefs, the latter being considered the most independent.

Concerning what is described above, Mok et al. (2021), consider motivation for students, in many cases, focuses on learning a second language to visit foreign destinations or start studying abroad, which is part of the requirements for the field of study this research includes for the experimentation stage. It implies that the knowledge acquired during studies refers mainly to academic topics by means of resources obtained from the social networks.

The example of the students who are part of this study is an example of instrumentalism in terms of human interests in learning a foreign language. Students view international higher education as an opportunity to increase their academic knowledge, knowledge of the world and achieve a high return on investment in higher education.

In addition to this, Hayat et al. (2020) highlight that academic self-efficacy (as a cognitive assessment) can influence academic emotions. Furthermore, since the introduction of self-efficacy, many researchers have examined the role of self-efficacy in academic performance; social cognitive theory views self-efficacy as an important construct that influences both performance and motivation.

Hayat et al. (2020) assume that despite the positive effect of self-efficacy on the number of attempts, evidence shows that the quality of effort of self-efficacy students is also different; such students use a variety of deeper cognitive and meta-cognitive processing strategies. Besides, this researcher considers that students with higher self-efficacy use deeper cognitive and meta-cognitive processing strategies than their peers with lower self-efficacy.

To Hayat et al. (2020) there are three motivational components that can be related to components of self-regulated learning, such as meta-cognitive strategies: (a) the

affective component, which involves the emotional reactions of students to the task (pride, anger...), (b) the expectations component, which involves the students' emotional reactions to the task (pride, anger...), and (c) the motivational component, which involves the students' emotional reactions to the task (pride, anger...).

They also emphasise the state of mind in learning a second language, in which physiological reactions and responses to certain conditions, actions and events must be considered. Educators define academic emotions as those directly related to achievement, activities, and results in education. Therefore, favourable responses, such as enjoyment, pride, and hope, are considered as learning friendly while adverse reactions, such as boredom, anger, and anxiety, are activators, such as joy, pride, anger and shame, are seen as learning deactivators.

Based on Du (2020), the factors that influence the success rate of an individual in learning a second or foreign language are considered, taking into account aspects such as the desire to learn the language, the desire to learn in general and the relationship with the language. Motivational orientation is closely related to the use of strategies by students and can influence both the type and the number of strategies for FLL used.

Further, Du (2020) indicated that research in motivation and the use of language learning strategies shows that cognitive and metacognitive strategies have a higher correlation with motivation. In the same way, the frequency of use of strategies has a positive correlation with motivation. Likewise, different studies have addressed the interaction between the motivation of English students and learning strategies. A topic that is being studied lately corresponds to the influence of gender on the use of learning strategies for FLL.

Du (2020) assures that gender is another important factor to consider in students' choice of strategies. It has been tested that women use more strategies when learning a language. In addition, when examining the use of strategies, it has been found that women use four categories of strategies more than men. However, there are specific factors or reasons that have influenced the decline in English proficiency in some countries. Santos et al. (2022) focus on the following elements since they are necessary to determine success or failure in FLL:

- Motivation is a key factor in defining the failure or success in a strenuous activity. Therefore, motivation is required for the language learning process and influences the development of linguistic competence, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary in the students. Likewise, it was evidenced that the more positive the students' attitudes towards learning, the more motivated they are to learn English. Another issue related to success or failure in FLL is how students see themselves in relation to English. Those students who visualise English in their future and consider it as a fundamental pillar for academic and professional development are successful L2 learners.
- Learning environment refers to the different physical places, contexts and cultures in which students learn. It is a diverse platform where users engage and interact while learning new skills, but it can also refer to places where students can learn, such as after-school and outdoor settings, and includes learning resources and technologies, didactic materials, learning methods and their relationship with social and global contexts.
- Teaching strategies are a fundamental component in learning in the classroom; they depend on various teaching elements such as skills, objectives, age, level of students, learning styles, subject or chair, the environment, and the way of learning. However, the teaching strategies depend on the methodology, themes, activities and representations that the English teacher applies to impart knowledge.

In the same way, Santos et al. (2022) argue that strategies integrate the work in teams to improve and encourage the participants to interact with the members of a group. As a teaching strategy, the profile of language teachers (age, sex, educational level and number of years of teaching) should be considered. It represents an essential factor for the strategies used in the classroom, together with the evolution and different generations of students.

- Socioeconomic factors play a role in some societies and inhabitants of specific parts of the world. In some countries, the use of the English language represents a status symbol. Nevertheless, it is not linked to the inhabitants' daily life since English is still considered a measure of intelligence and social

status in most countries. It is shown that students of high socioeconomic status always perform better than those of low socioeconomic status in English. One of the causes for this might be they learn languages at an earlier age or in private courses. On the other hand, low social class students have less time to concentrate, less access to materials in English, they do not count on network signal or internet connection. They lack support for educational resources such as schools, classrooms, books and teachers (Santos et al., 2022).

Hayat et al. (2020) also point out that emotions have complex links with cognitive, motivational and behavioural processes. Therefore, they have a place in the process of learning a second language, especially in all learning situations that students experience (class participation, learning, tests before and after) and in clinical situations.

It is also considered that emotions are essential factors that directly or indirectly impact in performance, satisfaction, physical health, motivation, learning strategies, cognitive resources and learning. They also address independent learning, strong teacher-student interaction, classroom learning, concentration, processing, storage, and retrieval of information, and therefore learning outcomes.

Hayat et al. (2020) also support, on the one hand, the idea that pleasant, positive emotions positively influence and predict academic performance because they have a significant relationship with midterm exam grades. On the other hand, deactivated unpleasant emotions reduce motivation and disturb data processing. It demonstrates the negative effect of these emotions on academic performance.

Additionally, Hayat et al. (2020) emphasise a vital aspect to take into account in the process of learning a second language or other languages, which is related to the impact of academic self-efficacy on academic performance. It considers students' beliefs and attitudes about their ability to have academic success and beliefs about their ability to complete academic tasks.

It is also worth mentioning that self-efficacy beliefs lead to excellent performance

thanks to more significant commitment, effort and perseverance. Students with high self-efficacy beliefs attribute their failure to trying less than they are capable of, while students with low self-efficacy beliefs attribute their failure to low ability. Thus, self-efficacy can influence the choice of tasks and persistence in them.

In contrast, it should be recognised that students with low self-efficacy are more likely to fear tasks, avoid them, procrastinate, and abandon them prematurely. Conversely, people with high self-efficacy are more likely to trust themselves to find a solution to complex problems, be patient during the process, try harder, and persevere more to overcome challenges (Hayat et al., 2020).

According to Khansir et al. (2021), in line with the learning strategies that have had an impact on research on language teaching in general and English in particular, students can successfully solve several English language learning problems. Teacher can apply learning strategies in their English language teaching practice. Since learning strategies focus on enabling learners to improve the four English language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), making students aware of the function these strategies have in their FLL proficiency is a must. This is one of the implementations some schools are doing to make it possible for FLL students to achieve the levels required by the CEFR.

Learning strategies are essential to understand and apply methods, approaches, and techniques for teaching English as a foreign or second language in ELT classrooms. Learning strategies have been one of the most essential phenomena in teaching English. There is no doubt that learning strategies have influenced the teaching of English in EFL classrooms.

Khansir et al. (2021) argue that learning strategies allow the development of knowledge of the English language by both teachers and students in EFL and ESL classes. Learning strategies have an impact on reducing the problems that teachers and students encounter when teaching and learning English as a foreign or second language in non-English speaking countries. They also support the view that learning strategies are essential in EFL classrooms.

It is worth mentioning that the importance of learning strategies in the acquisition

of the English language focuses on the relatively permanent behaviour change that occurs through regular practice under the premise of intentional learning and based on artificial material to learn a language. That is, learning factors such as motivation and attitude are necessary to learn languages; likewise, the teacher and the students represent an important educational triangle in language learning.

Learning strategies comprise many different aspects in the process of FLL, and they have been discussed above. Now, technology is one important strategy and resource that provides information on the learning of English as a foreign language, and needs to be explored in this paper. The purpose of this research is totally related to the use of technology with students who attend ESP classes; therefore, the following section is devoted to technology and its use in EFL.

4. THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

With the advent of the technological era, higher education centres have perceived the need to use new digital and educational technologies. Considering that nowadays it is very feasible that with a globalised world based on English as the international language of science, technology and academia, communication with experts in different disciplines becomes a fact that will help EFL instruction to improve. The real communication practice technology can bring to foreign language activities the diversity and the motivation students need (Kessler, 2018; Laurillard, 2013; Lupton et al., 2018; Ng, 2015; Asif et al., 2022, p.1).

Benavides et al. (2020) argue that it is necessary to consider that higher education institutions (HEIs) are affected by the technological advances brought by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and are forced to address digital transformation at all levels. The application of digital transformation approaches to the HEIs sector is an emerging field that has recently aroused interest because it can explain the complex relationships between the actors in a technology-supported educational environment.

Hence, digital transformation (DT) has become a priority for higher education institutions (HEIs) in the second decade of the 21st century. It is a natural and necessary process for organisations that are leaders in change and highly competitive in their fields. The fact that digital technologies can contribute to the business model of a company, changes in the structure of the product or the organisation or process automation can be expected. In addition, digital transformation contemplates technological models and opportunities that accelerate societies' teaching and learning processes.

Likewise, based on Benavides et al. (2020), the universities that represent the academic spaces are key actors in this transformation; they must evolve in an integrated way to survive and not disappear over time. However, effectively harnessing all the opportunities and potential opened up by the plethora of digital technologies and redefining entire business models across the entire value chain is not an easy task and is certainly challenging. Nevertheless, these challenges are

more pressing for organisations constantly striving to compete in the global market. Education, which is part of the cultural heritage of peoples, is the perfect organisation in society that needs to be immersed in the advances of technology, which constitute a vast academic space for institutions like those that offer higher education nowadays. This immersion has started and is already based on different learning theories.

Further, Radianti et al. (2020) indicate that many different learning theories should be highlighted, such as those based on information processing or social cognitive theory. Virtual Reality (VR), essential in developing VR applications for higher education, is firmly based on existing learning theories. These theories provide guidance on student motivation, the learning process, and learning outcomes.

Benavides et al. (2020) also indicate that higher education centres face disruptive scenarios integrated into new business models that change how they evolve over time. HE has been actively connecting internal and external customers to increase their commitment to the institutional organisation and improve their experience. However, although many HEIs are developing specific digital strategies in response to the significant shift towards new technologies, they need more vision, capacity, or will to apply them effectively. Therefore, regarding Marks and Thomas (2022), it is essential to have a comprehensive vision of Digital Transformation (DT) in higher education to understand the state of DT in this context and to characterise the dimensions, actors, and implementations that have occurred along the way of history in education.

Tadesse & Muluye (2020) mention that teaching practical and technical skills and assessing practical skills in communication technology for education is complex. The rapid transition to online learning has been challenging even for students, teachers and parents in countries with reliable ICT infrastructures and Internet access, where they also need the training to deliver effective online education. However, this support is especially limited in developing countries, where educational inequalities threaten the continuity of the educational System.

4.1. Educational Technology Integration

Tadesse and Muluye (2020) believe that distance learning is an excellent opportunity for teachers, students and families to incorporate technology in education. The introduction of online learning platforms, the use of Blackboard, Zoom, TronClass, Classin and WebChat group platforms has provided opportunities to expand learning. This technology, known as platforms, is the means to conduct online training and provide feedback on all courses.

Online teaching and learning are approaches to teaching that have been introduced previously in developed and some developing countries. However, the transition from face-to-face to online learning poses challenges for teachers, students, families and national governments due to the lack of funding, skills, ICT infrastructure, internet access and learning resources. It is important to mention that some subject matters are difficult or impossible to teach and learn through online teaching methods. Nonetheless, those subject matters such as sports, nursing, laboratory, music, and art have already been developed in online courses with some degree of success. Although they experience problems during the practical stages of theory application, artificial intelligence is becoming a possibility in these practical fields.

Moving from face-to-face to online learning has shown some arguments for aspects such as assessment, which is usually a complex issue for teachers. Nevertheless, teachers forced to change their assessment types have taken the challenge and have been successful in adapting to the online format. In addition, teachers complained that it was difficult to monitor students while participating in online course assessments, mainly ensuring that they do not cheat during online tests. Nowadays, technology is also fixing those teachers' needs. With the advent of artificial intelligence, matters such as even conducting lab tests, practical tests, and performance tests online are becoming a reality.

To provide opportunities for students and institutions to accommodate to new technologies, Sugiarta et al. (2019) present the fact that online education has evolved to the point in which it is possible to observe that online learning has been

assigned three functions in higher education institutions: online learning as supplementary, meaning students have the option to choose online learning or conventional learning; online learning as supplementary, which means that the use of online learning in the teaching and learning process is to provide additional material; and finally online learning as an alternative medium which means that online learning is one of the media that can be used in the teaching and learning process.

Iglesias-Pradas et al. (2021) argue that, on the one hand, it is fundamental that the learning combination is generated through synchronisation. Synchronous teaching and learning processes mean that the education process is based on online learning in which the teacher and students are physically separated in real-time. Asynchronous teaching and learning processes imply that the interactions are not in real-time; the separation is both spatial and temporal. Similarly, pre-recorded videos and presentations allow different levels of interaction. Here, synchronous courses are a combination of face-to-face classes where students and teachers meet in person and those in which the pre-recorded materials are studied in an asynchronous way.

On the other hand, another aspect to consider is asynchronous distance learning, which produces significantly better results. However, subsequent studies have found no difference between synchronous and asynchronous delivery modes, indicating that both modes are effective for online learning, although students prefer synchronous distance learning sessions.

The reason for this difference may be that asynchronous teaching offers greater flexibility, which may lead to better results for older students, while younger students may benefit more from the structure of mandatory synchronous sessions.

Desta et al. (2021) indicate that information and communication technologies (ICT) have launched new educational practices that can be rational methods of language learning and teaching within the EFL educational environment. This is because it is important to assume that teachers and students see technology as an active force. Other forms of online teaching and learning have developed over time.

According to Marks & Thomas (2022), virtual and augmented reality (VAR) technology is one of the most revolutionary of this century. In higher education, VAR is in the early stages of adopting innovative technology as a teaching tool. The technology is suitable for taking students to physically restricted places (construction sites or informal urban settlements). It allows them to interact with 3D models or designs in orientations and scales previously impossible.

The competences generated by students from VAR in education include: spatial visualisation, innovation, problem solving, critical thinking and empathy. The exciting possibilities of education are limited only by the imagination of the creator. Therefore, the adoption of technological innovations in higher education has been described using several frameworks, including innovation diffusion theory, whereby, for virtual labs, important adoption factors were identified as technology acceptance, relative advantage, intention to use, and probability.

Testability positively correlates with innovation adoption rates because it allows the user to experience the technology directly. Hands-on experience with VAR technology is essential for an educator to be willing to adopt it when teaching.

4.2. Facing challenges during COVID-19

By the year 2020, the world was facing important improvements in education in general and in technology. Nobody thought that those changes were the ones that could help humankind to survive a lethal virus that killed millions of people in the world. This virus presented a challenge for medicine, education, technology and the world of politics. COVID-19, the lethal virus, made the world change not only in conservation policies but also in life-saving strategies, which were mainly represented in the lockdown of human beings in their houses, where daily activities took place by means of technology.

4.2.1. Transition to remote learning

Tadesse & Muluye (2020) emphasise that the COVID-19 pandemic affected not only students, but also teachers and parents around the world, where more than 1.5

billion students from 195 countries were out of Higher academic centres. This absenteeism from schools took place because of the fatal effects of the virus that was killing people. The entire educational system was at stake, but technology was the resource used to surpass the inconveniences felt due to a long lockdown period. Classes, exams and assessments started being developed online and continued for almost 2 more years at the different levels of education. This phenomenon started to show inequalities in education in society.

It is a fact that the COVID-19 crisis aggravated social inequalities in schools. It was evidenced that educational institutions had to improve their digital infrastructure, and teachers should have higher levels of digital literacy. HEIs had to provide good equipment with digital technologies and educational resources to guarantee online learning. Thus, distance learning was a way to continue providing education in the world.

This kind of education never contemplated a huge problem. This problem was constituted by the differences in the educational contexts. Online teaching and learning processes, at the beginning, were not accessible in developing countries. HEIs, which were public ones, did not have the necessary infrastructure to provide students with this kind of solution due to the scarce resources for technology in education they had.

In the same way, many parents did not have the technological means to make their sons and daughters part of the new online school. Information was also difficult to expand to the low social groups, which did not have technological tools at home. Therefore, there was a lack of the necessary information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, computers, radio and television for distance learning.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing measures were widely implemented by governments around the world to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the field of education, instructors were encouraged to adapt their teaching methods, transitioning from traditional face-to-face instruction to remote distance learning models utilising technology to facilitate

continued instruction (My Ho, 2024, p.219). The education sector suffered immensely due to skyrocketing coronavirus cases and faced numerous challenges in teaching and learning, which necessitated a rapid transformation in educational methodologies (Qamar et al., 2024, p.2).

Similarly, Mok et al. (2021) point out that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on international higher education and student mobility, posing a significant financial challenge for universities and countries that depended on tuition abroad. Furthermore, the international education sector became an outlet for international students and a limited resource. As the pandemic spreads unevenly across countries and regions, student mobility flows vary by region.

In the same line, Tadesse and Muluye (2020) also indicate that the closure of universities hurts the mental and physical health of students, parents and teachers around the world, especially in developing countries, due to the rapid increase in the number of infected people. This fact generated anxiety and uncertainty about what could happen next.

Lockdowns due to the coronavirus could cause stress, fear and anxiety in people, including fear of death and the related fear of family members' deaths. The pandemic could seriously affect careers or prevent college students from graduating that year. It was also needed to consider that not all of the students interacted well with online learning apps and platforms.

García-Morales et al. (2021) consider that for universities to transition to a sustainable online education model, they had to use technology to reimagine the curriculum, transform assessment activities, reuse traditional faculty and schools (to deliver specific education), and focus on the value by reinventing service models and reinventing themselves. A culture of engagement had to be created to support this digital transformation, and students, faculty, and administration must work together to support and navigate the change.

Likewise, it is worth mentioning that universities also faced other obstacles in this transformation, such as financial restrictions and limitations caused by the current

infrastructure problems. Public universities faced budget reductions due to limited government funding. Universities faced declining student numbers due to the current uncertain economic climate. The IT infrastructure available in universities was an obstacle to fully adopting the digital transformation, and some investment was necessary to improve these technological capabilities.

Nevertheless, Mok et al. (2021) also argue that some professionals were still optimistic that international student mobility could remain strong after the pandemic. In addition, previous efforts to globalise and internationalise higher education had a solid foundation for student mobility in each country, including interoperable education systems, integrated credit transfer systems, and promoting student exchange policies.

Besides, García-Morales et al. (2021) emphasised critical assessment of the internationalisation of education for the future. People began to question the value and benefits of international education. The COVID-19 pandemic raised questions about the future of international higher education. Therefore, the world of higher education has been impacted by the pandemic in international higher education and international student mobility in particular. People are obligated to question the extent to which digital pedagogies are, in the COVID context, a rushed online migration. What happens during the pandemic forced the case for digital transitioning. The aggressiveness of the health case was an emergency, and in such a context, the use of technology in the lives of people became a necessity. Many negative thoughts about technology in aspects of human life, like in education changed, and teachers and students have started bringing development in higher education to classes (Watermeyer et al., 2021).

4.2.2. Impact on EFL Education

Due to the lockdown imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Carrió-Pastor (2023) indicates that universities had to redesign synchronous academic hours, resulting in a shift in English teaching and assessment practices. Consequently, a multi-modal corpus emerged as a highly effective tool, facilitating the development of simultaneous interaction for conducting online and offline tasks in a data-driven

learning approach.

This approach in education involved creating digital learning objects stored on a platform, serving as a repository. Moreover, data-driven learning became a data provider for learners. Self-study materials became available for the second and foreign language classroom, enhancing students' speaking proficiency. Simultaneously, evaluating learners' multi-modal tasks was possible by means of the use of a rubric grid that guided them in completing tasks accurately and encouraged self-reflection on their work.

Further, Carrió-Pastor (2022a) argues that using formative assessment in synchronous language teaching has been tested as valuable, especially amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nowadays, despite disruptions, students benefit from collaborative learning and maintain active communication with peers and teachers, fostering a sense of class community even during difficult periods such as lockdowns.

This cooperative language use and learning include enhanced language proficiency, increased fluency in assignments, and the opportunity for students to self-regulate their individual and group learning pace. This analysis underscores the importance of formative feedback in creating a resilient and effective learning environment, especially in times of crisis.

Likewise, García-Morales et al. (2021) consider that it is essential to point out that there are many online resources. The materials, such as communication platforms and solutions around the world, contribute to the digitisation of the entire teaching and learning process, which started in the COVID-19 scenario. Most teachers used technologies to support teaching in courses, such as the university's online platform, instant messaging tools (WhatsApp, Telegram), video conferencing tools and educational apps (Google Classroom), as well as email and phone calls. Other valuable technologies in general are Cisco WebEx, GoToMeeting, Microsoft Teams, Monosnap, Loom, and OBS. All of them are used for science and education.

5. BLENDED LEARNING

Blended learning (BL), an approach that started to be used in education, dates back to the 1990s when professionals in education started using a combination of traditional teaching and online delivery of instruction. By 1999, the term Blended learning started to be used. Garrison & Kanuka (2004) identified the usefulness of this approach in education in general.

5.1. Blended-learning characteristics

Pantusin-Cedeño & Olives-Vera (2021) determine that it is crucial to recognise that the blended learning model is currently a hot topic in education and has been proposed as an alternative to technological advances that supposedly solve the limitations of computers in terms of self-development. Blended learning is based on the use of different learning strategies, for example: e-learning software, audiovisual technologies, textbooks, personalised learning models and techniques, among others.

These authors also say that there are three elements for the implementation of the blended learning model, among which it is worth mentioning the instructional model that contributes to the motivation of students to develop their academic abilities and guarantee meaningful learning. The technological resources are also elements supported by e-learning software.

According to Ferheen Bukhari & Mahmoud Basaffar (2019) another important element in blended learning is the design of instruction for the combination of face-to-face and virtual contexts to achieve a correct learning process in which students learn a range of content. This learning process takes place through real training, to reach a new level in knowledge and develop actions that were not achieved before.

In a similar manner, Escamilla (2022) argues that blended learning is related to constructivist and cognitivist theories. It states that knowledge comes from the external environment and that the student interprets this data, which permits him/her to create semiotic representations and constructions. As can be seen, social and participatory learning is based on the premise that what is outside human beings

helps them to learn. It emphasises the importance of the individual as a social being capable of constructing meaning from experiences. It means significant learning is required under a favourable attitude and an adequate presentation of the material. It is also necessary to combine elements of both formats and use each strategy to improve the teaching and learning process.

Further, Escamilla (2022) also considers that the reliability of the interaction in mixed formats is required and necessary to distribute the time between face-to-face learning and online learning. Consequently, decisions about the combination of space, time, and reliability are important in defining the dimensions of interaction in mixed learning environments, where it is worth highlighting the main advantages, such as adaptation, organisation of students' time, and flexibility.

Semanate-Quiñonez et al. (2021) note blended learning is an increasingly powerful alternative in the academic field. A systematic review of the theories, concepts and models that have supported the development of this methodology is carried out, mediated by the use of technology in education in the last decades. The tendencies and challenges assumed in hybrid or blended learning include the main decisions made in higher education in relation to the use of 1) virtual reality, 2) learning with video games, 3) e-learning, 4) blended learning, 5) artificial intelligence, 6) online education, 7) education with mobile technology, and 8) resources considered as survival factors.

These virtual spaces encourage student engagement and increase their autonomy and participation. In short, adaptability is a crucial factor for the successful development of blended learning, and for this, educational policy must prepare students to become citizens of a society in which access to information, knowledge and decision-making are a reflection of quality education, which can be provided face to face and online.

For Syakur et al. (2020), blended learning is also an approach to learning that combines the strengths of face-to-face and e-learning. The idea behind it is to create a learning environment in which teachers and students work with a mix of books, presentations, classroom activities, and digital resources, including online materials

or mobile apps. In the same way, blended learning constitutes aspects such as the integration, restructuring of time and online learning to promote students' participation in their learning process (Escamilla, 2022).

Semanate-Quiñonez et al. (2021) mention that it is vital to note that the blended learning model allows a process of integrating educational attendance with technology; aside from the objective of this approach is to identify adequate methods to respond to educational needs through the use of technological tools.

It is important to mention that blended learning is based on social constructivism, given that blended learning systems quickly adapt to the problem-solving model derived from constructivism. It focuses on learning through the students' initiative and motivates their autonomy to promote the development of competences. Thus, the main challenges for teachers in the teaching-learning process are reducing their role and focusing more on identifying characteristics, skills, and competences with digital tools and generating content for learning that is going to be constructed by the student according to his/her needs.

Additionally, Semanate-Quiñonez et al. (2021) argue that the blended learning model is focused on rethinking the objectives of educational work and the mechanisms that mediate its development. Blended learning considers that the knowledge society assumes the individual as a subject, co-manager, and partner in their process, encouraging everyone participating in "teaching-learning" to play an active role. It is considered very important that students show a sustained interest in self-learning and autonomy to make the best use of technological tools.

Al Bataineh et al. (2019) say that blended learning can be complex if not applied correctly. Therefore, it is necessary to give confidence and support to university students and their faculty since they are the most important participants in implementing blended learning successfully and sustainably. Among the potential challenges of blended learning are access to technology and the Internet, the need for an LMS that meets all the needs of students and faculty, the skills and attitude necessary to work with new technologies, and live and direct interaction.

It is also needed to mention that this teaching approach not only streamlines the learning process by granting technical and pedagogical responsibility to teachers but also contributes to contextualising the course based on the students' abilities and learning styles, motivations, previous ideas, values and attitudes (Semanate-Quíñonez et al., 2021).

Iglesias-Pradas et al. (2021) emphasise that recently, attention has focused on comparing blended and face-to-face learning, with results showing that blended learning works better and that different variables, such as the type of computer support used and interaction management, are favourable for its use in educational settings and different contexts.

According to Cardoso et al. (2019), distance learning is taking root in higher education institutions, especially in the context of blended learning, forcing institutions and teachers to face new challenges in the teaching/learning process. Blended learning is associated with cost reduction and efficiency and allows learners to combine face-to-face learning with online learning (e-learning or m-learning) and take advantage of the best of both worlds. It also allows greater flexibility in time and space; meaningful learning is expected to emphasise learner autonomy and consider different learning styles and preferences. Thus, blended learning can inspire curriculum design, including updating old face-to-face pedagogies to accommodate blended or hybrid principles and teaching.

Escamilla-Martínez and Muriel-Amezcu (2021) refer to blended learning as a form of learning that combines face-to-face and online elements. It has been proposed in recent years, and given the advantages that blended learning brings to all the agents involved in the educational process, it is a viable option to face the changes in higher education that require adapting to teaching through digital media. It is considered a new way of learning and teaching for educational and social reasons.

As it is possible to observe from the authors reviewed so far, this learning approach promotes interaction, access, and quality of learning among students, where physical environments and technology are combined and articulated. This methodology has emerged from the limitations of e-learning in the application of

new learning approaches, moving from questions that emphasise the need for technical requirements for e-learning to be successful, to questions that emphasise the limitations of e-learning in the application of new learning approaches.

Rasmitadila et al. (2020) explain that blended learning represents a concept that uses a combination of e-learning methods with traditional methods that can provide solutions, provide benefits and are very useful both in the classroom and in organisational learning. One way to achieve learning objectives, especially in higher education, is to modify or restructure the learning system. It is noteworthy that it can be used to combine face-to-face and online or blended learning systems so that students can receive a deep and meaningful learning experience. A key feature of the blended learning approach is that it integrates face-to-face and online education by establishing systems to optimise student engagement and achieve the goal of education, optimising face-to-face learning.

Escamilla (2022) also says that it is a combination of resources, learning tools, teaching methods and approaches, techniques and activities that maximise the benefits for all of the teachers and learners in a flexible learning environment. This approach focuses on the reduction of uncertainty and contributes to innovation, improvement of attitude, and support for face-to-face classes. Blended learning is also a resource for the development of essential skills in active parts of projects, in the acquisition of information in the teaching process, and in the connection between different disciplines. It also involves the autonomy that develops in the student self-training, in which students consider that they work at their own pace.

Rasmitadila et al. (2020) also highlight the contribution that blended learning has brought to education. The most important contribution is the evolution of learning that focuses on the use of technological developments that are integrated with traditional education, such as face-to-face education, which is a response to educational challenges. Blended learning also shows a combination of multimedia technology, CD-ROM video streaming, virtual classroom, voice mail, email, conference calls, Internet text animation, and video streaming for academic purposes. One of those purposes is the use of Blended Learning in the teaching and learning processes of English as a foreign language.

Rahim (2019) describes blended learning as a modern teaching method that combines traditional learning methods with online and distance learning. As far as it is concerned, blended learning is a revolution in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language compared to the traditional methods associated with language teaching. Accordingly, some aspects of blended learning will also contribute to student-centred learning by providing student-centred tasks and helping teachers to develop more student-centred activities.

Further, García Salinas (2010) considers that blended learning is the use of different didactic methodologies in language teaching, such as the communicative approach, cooperative work or exploratory learning. It can be achieved through the use of physical and virtual resources. For instance, Computer Mediated Communication or a combination of face-to-face and computer-based teaching, using materials technology (a type of software) designed to allow students to access online materials to support their learning.

Moreover, this author believes that these approaches contribute to increasing the quantity and quality of human interaction in learning environments. Blended learning enables learners to be active learners. A community of learners can collaborate anytime, anywhere, thanks to the benefits of machine learning tools.

5.2. Learner's perceptions about traditional learning and online learning

According to Dowling-Hetherington et al. (2020) learners strongly perceive technology as a complement to the traditional face-to-face class lecture. In addition, these authors argue that higher education learners who have been enrolled in classrooms where the classical school in which the teacher speaks and the students pay attention, need to receive some kind of training about the most effective technology tools and applications in order to reinforce their traditional learning in class time and after class.

According to Ramírez & Peña (2022), the perception of learners about blended learning shows a positive attitude towards the use of technology as a support tool

for learning English in this approach. It is due to they are aware of how these tools can help them acquire the necessary skills to learn a second language, but they affirm that students still do not fully control or master the use of TICs in their educational context. Without the knowledge of communication technology and the Internet, any transformation of teaching approaches that use these tools won't be as successful as they can be if, on the contrary, teachers and students are trained for the academic use of TICs.

Based on Syakur et al. (2020), blended learning combines aspects of e-learning, such as online learning, streaming video, and synchronous and asynchronous audio, with traditional face-to-face learning. Blended learning combines independent online and face-to-face learning, using media and technology to provide learners with a more enjoyable and practical learning experience.

Huang (2016) highlights that, regarding learners' insights, blended learning environments make them feel more comfortable, self-focused and motivated. This is due to providing an effective combination of face-to-face and online learning, which reinforces their work since they have the opportunity to face different task options. Thus, learners in face-to-face learning can be guided by classmates and tutors, who are fundamental in the learning process because they get learners involved actively in appealing class activities such as expositions, simulations, presentations, talks, and team discussions. In contrast, in online learning, learners can access a wide range of interactive digital activities and extensive resources.

Ferheen Bukhari & Mahmoud Basaffar (2019) indicate that most learners view blended learning as beneficial. This is because it fosters multiple engaging and dynamic environments, promotes understanding of peers' perspectives, and encourages collaboration and communication. All of these aspects above contribute to enhancing performance through peer and teacher assessment suggestions.

In addition, learners consider that any subject matter can be developed through a blended learning approach because it provides flexible timetables, minimising the time teachers and students spend in class. Wang et al. (2021) also say that blended learning leads to favourable perceptions among learners due to it makes the EFL

learning process effective and efficient.

Wright (2017) reveals that learners see face-to-face learning as a way to experience learning in a better way since they have the opportunity to count on direct peer and instructor interactions, personalised guidelines, no need for an Internet connection, and longer class time. On the other hand, learners believe that through online learning, they have flexibility in timetable and location, less time, reduced fatigue and stress, positive learning environment. They feel free to reuse the materials repeatedly, and they can have easy access to digital resources. Therefore, the learners view both in-class and online learning as helpful to the learning process only if the technology and digital resources are available and easy to use.

Ginzburg & Daniela (2024) emphasise that technological resources are preferred to physical texts among adult learners because they are not attractive to them. It is important to consider that this technology is seen as a complement in traditional classes and not as a unique approach for the classroom. In contrast, learners define the integration of technological resources as part of the virtual and blended methods designed or set to provide genuine activities such as TED talks, news reports, YouTube videos, and digital materials with free access. Thus, learners consider an alternative blended teaching as a transition between traditional and online learning in order to lessen the learner's barriers to participation. It could be applied to synchronous and asynchronous academic time.

Different research papers in the field of education assure that the experience with blended classroom settings attempts to provide learners with dynamic and accessible learning experiences, motivate them intrinsically to participate actively in the process of language learning and work on their path (Zainuddin & Perera, 2017). Blended learning is considered to be a viable solution to the current issues by allowing more activity-based learning rather than information transfer during the face-to-face class meetings, thus pinning hopes on facilitating a more flexible, collaborative and active learning environment (Huynh & Nguyen, 2019, p. 1100).

According to Khan & Khan (2024), listening and speaking are crucial skills in the EFL class, and the use of a blended approach can provide comprehensible input

which is difficult to get in face-to-face only English classes. Many researchers have revealed that blended learning makes learners adopt a favourable position and progressively participate in the learning process, compared to face-to-face and online methods, which do not present the students with the opportunity to have the teacher and the technology for clarification and additional explanations.

Students' awareness of digital transformation capabilities positively influences their satisfaction and intention to continue online learning. Factors such as family encouragement, timely financial support, guidance from instructors, and investments in physical infrastructure by educational institutions contribute to students' self-directed learning ability and acceptance of online learning during the digital transformation process at institutions that adopt blended learning (My Ho, 2024, p.226).

Nanjundaiah & Anuradha (2024) highlight that combining hybrid learning involves learners in the learning process and allows them to acquire new topics on their own. Regarding this, learners feel they would instead learn more in blended learning than traditional learning because they view this approach as more appealing, dynamic and engaging. It can even help them develop their learning skills to integrate, evaluate and make reasoned judgments.

Moni (2024) conducted a study to assess undergraduate college learners' viewpoints on hybrid learning feedback. Students who participated in the study think that online feedback is highly essential for enhancing learners' language learning because they get a lot of opportunities to reinforce their cognitive level on the three helpful stages' feed-up, feedback, and feed-forward, which means planning the aim of the activity, reorganising their ideas about their weaknesses and strengths and guidance on how to apply the enhancement on following tasks. Besides, feedback given from specific activities by peers enables them to use self-assessment, raise self-confidence, and adopt a positive attitude with the commentaries provided.

5.3. Blended Learning in EFL Education

Tran & Duong (2024) posit that English Language Education acknowledges that

traditional approaches must be revised to suit diverse learner populations, cultural backgrounds, learning styles and abilities. The blended learning approach in EFL provides creative and updated sources through conventional and online classroom instruction that may improve learners' critical thinking (Chen, 2022, p.1).

Rahim (2019) also analyses that technology is a tool that contributes to improving language skills because language classrooms are equipped with essential technological tools that effectively influence the practice of foreign language teaching and learning. In line with current educational trends, blended learning can be used as a fundamental approach for teaching foreign languages.

Al Bataineh et al. (2019) argue that currently, many researchers have studied the training of the new generations through technology and its different uses for FL classrooms. They discovered that the application of technology is widespread in all areas of education, especially in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, traditional teaching methods are being replaced by approaches that are increasingly integrated with new technologies in foreign language teaching.

The digital age presents a goldmine of resources for English language learners. While traditional classroom-based learning remains essential, digital tools can provide valuable complementary resources that offer flexibility, personalisation, and engagement. As the area of education continues to evolve, training students in these digital tools can empower them to be in charge of their own learning journey (Nosirova, 2023, p. 41).

Moreover, Al Bataineh et al. (2019) consider that nowadays, blended learning is an applicable approach and the teaching of English as a foreign language is surrounded by its peculiarities. In fact, blended learning has changed the educational context and paved the way for teaching English effectively. In reality, blended learning involves language teachers collaborating on various interactive language activities while incorporating a dual component that combines face-to-face teaching and technological approaches.

Rahim (2019) also believes that blended learning facilitates language learning and

helps foreign language teachers achieve several pedagogical goals through the hundreds of technological trends available to be integrated into education. Hence, it underlines the need to rethink study plans and provide learning platforms with these technological trends that will have a pedagogical impact on teaching.

According to Dahik-Solis et al. (2020) proficiency in English communication is considered equally vital alongside other essential skills within the learners' professional domain. Therefore, the incorporation of English for Specific Purposes into the higher education curriculum becomes imperative, especially in non-English speaking countries.

This integration aims to enhance the competitiveness of learners in contemporary society, which can be developed through the emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that enable the enrolment of many university learners in open online courses. Leveraging this new e-learning approach, coupled with efficient English for Specific Purpose learning, holds the potential to empower the development of communicative skills on a global scale.

Consequently, Rahim (2019) indicates that a paradigm shift in the integration of technological approaches will also have repercussions in teaching English as a Foreign language because they provide students of English as a foreign language with various collaborative tasks. Blended learning demonstrates that teaching requirements are being assessed and that the impact, outcomes and future directions of blended learning are increasingly influencing the educational environment.

Similarly, language skills reinforce the integrity of English language learning and encourage students to learn the language authentically. This is consistent with blended learning methods that enable the development of students' critical thinking abilities in English, improving learning and teaching quality and utilising a generative learning environment.

Rahim (2019) emphasises that various technological concepts have emerged and have been used by educators. CALL (computer-assisted language learning), MALL (Mobile phone-assisted language learning) and many other online models are

widely used in teaching and learning platforms. Blended learning is one of many technological approaches used in teaching that can be effectively incorporated into active language learning. Although it is difficult to create suitable situations for all students, blended learning approaches can help create flexible, interactive, stimulating and inspiring teaching and learning environments.

Terzioğlu & Kurt (2022), argue that blended learning is an approach which combines the teaching of content using CALL (computer-assisted language learning) and MALL (mobile language learning). It combines face-to-face teaching with online activities, which represent the introduction of digital tools used just in time to support different learning styles.

Therefore, a new definition of blended learning emerges. Here, the focus is on reducing the time dedicated to courses and on complementing class time with digital tools (Learning Management System). It is fundamental to consider that it is an approach in which students use the English language in a more active way. What is more significant, it is an approach in which the use of English goes beyond the classroom, where shy students can overcome their fear of interacting with their peers in L2. Furthermore, it is also interesting that the greater exposure to the English input opens the doors for greater production.

Thus, in blended learning, both teachers and students must participate, especially since it is a change from professional-focused learning to student-focused learning. This means that the student is active in the learning process. Through blended learning, students have the possibility to be the online leader, the self-taught student, to have access to the laboratories and to the flexible atmosphere for learning a foreign language (Al Bataineh et al., 2019).

Escobar & Silva (2020) mention that E-learning and CALL refer to the distance learning process that involves many aspects of the information society. It is also a pedagogical tool that promotes more personal, active and cooperative learning, focused on constructing and maintaining interpersonal networks in a personal environment through media and technological tools by means of which students can develop a permanent dialogue.

Hence, it should be noted that CALL is a model that can improve the language learning process through various technological tools and a continuous and organised flow of activities that are closely linked to real-life situations and provide students with meaningful learning. CALL allows students to develop their listening, reading, grammatical, written and oral skills and encourages the acquisition of new vocabulary and the improvement of pronunciation.

Hotimah (2020) argues that Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is the study and research of using computers in teaching and learning languages. CALL's primary goal is to find ways to use computers in language teaching and learning. Specifically, CALL refers to using computer technology in language teaching, including word processing, presentation packages, exercises, tutorials, simulations, problem-solving, games, multimedia CD-ROMs, and Internet applications such as email, chat and the World Wide Web (WWW). Therefore, blended learning can be considered an approach in which CALL intervenes.

From the same perspective, Klímová & Toman (2020) consider that blended learning in language teaching is currently a topic of great interest for language teachers around the world. Blended learning integrates traditional teaching and face-to-face learning with different types of technology-based instruction.

Nowadays, many higher education institutions use blended learning as an additional tool to develop students' vocabulary, among other skills. Therefore, the objective of blended learning is to optimise the achievement of learning objectives through the use of teaching and learning technologies that adapt to students' learning styles, in order to provide adequate knowledge of the L2. For this reason, many higher education institutions today use blended learning as an additional tool to develop students' skills.

In simpler terms, Yudhana (2021) highlights that blended learning environments create a situation for integrating technology and language skills. One of the most important factors is the mode of delivery, which can take many forms, such as open-source learning platforms, collaborative software, and online courses. Additionally, a variety of online activities can also be based on events, such as face-to-face courses, live e-learning and self-paced learning.

In contrast, in the language learning process, combining face-to-face and online teaching is a practical approach to developing language skills, especially receptive skills such as reading, which is necessary to improve English proficiency. Therefore, the use of blended learning to improve language learning in education has been established significantly; however, its evolution has led to its adaptation to various areas of language learning.

6. TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS AND DIGITAL RESOURCES

Dash (2022) emphasises that integrating technology into the learning process can effectively enhance the learner's abilities and understanding if one focuses on educational theories. Thus, it is fundamental that academic fields stay up-to-date and relate to the vast technological advancements worldwide by embracing modern technological tools, for instance: "computerisation, multimedia devices, mobile phones, audio/visual effects applications, and social media"(p.9).

The technological tools allow the engagement with the learners in an organised and modern way in class. According to Nosirova (2023), language learning has evolved due to the digital era and the use of technology in education. Nosirova (2023) also refers to e-learning as the process of learners applying digital media to learning. Digital media contains the Internet, corporate networks, computers, satellite broadcasting, audiotapes, videotapes, interactive TV, and compact disks. Digital tools, software, or apps can be applied through technological devices such as a computer, smartphone, or tablet.

For instance, digital tools that can be integrated for English language acquisition processes are:

- Mobile apps like Duolingo, Babbel, and Rosetta Stone allow learners to be involved in flexible and portable practice of vocabulary, grammar and dialogues by integrating gaming to make learning more appealing.
- BBC Learning English and The British Council websites also provide various digital resources to help learners practice grammar, listening, and speaking skills through video content and interaction with other learners. It is also possible to find online courses like Coursera, Udemy, and FutureLearn that are Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) provided frequently by universities or Language academies. Coaches or peers guide them to help learners acquire the language progressively through e-learning activities.
- Virtual reality (VR) offers learners a simulated, realistic environment to

practice and improve their language skills and boost their confidence. Augmented reality (AR) immerses learners in interactive learning contexts through digital resources.

Nonetheless, the factors affecting the participants' negative attitudes about online learning through the MOOCs usage can be summarised in the lack of interactivity and social interaction, the lack of technological proficiency, the limited language proficiency, the limited feedback, the unclear learning objectives, the inadequate resources, and the suspect credibility of the certificates. (Shaaan & Ahmad, 2024, p.343) Based on Asif et al. (2022) analysis, digital tools and web-based platforms strongly influence the learner's academic performance, boosting their English language cognitive level and promoting confidence in applying them in varied contexts.

Wentzel & De Hart (2020) propose that podcasts and videocasts are highly implemented in academic contexts due to the fact that they supply further flexible learning resources to learners. In this regard, podcasts and videocasts can immerse learners, especially if the resources are crafted to allow learners to interact actively with the learning content. Besides, videocasts provide complex content that is understandable for the learners if they watch it before reading or when they struggle with topics in the study unit. Thus, these kinds of resources are dynamic; they evolve continuously and let the lectures enhance the learner's insights and provide feedback about the design principles.

Furthermore, García-Morales et al. (2021) argue that tools such as video conferencing, sharing materials (for example, slides, videos, and presentations), interacting via chat, creating discussion forums or working groups, supervising practical activities, assessing and guide students, record explanations and make them available to students, among others can be used synchronously or asynchronously and in an integrated manner to get the attention of students there.

Cassum & Fatima (2024) highlight that due to a sudden educational shift, gamification is highly considered to involve millennial learners in traditional, online or blended learning processes to increase their interaction, collaboration and

motivation. Hence, e-gaming tools create thrilling learning experiences with the whole learner's integration because they associate games with spare time activities.

Further, Cassie and Fatima emphasise that Educational Games (EG) differ from gamification because an EG is designed for an enjoyable experience in a specific course, while gamification is focused on engaging and encouraging learners' experiences to retain, check and self-assess their progress. Based on learners' acquaintance with e-games platforms, the following were commonly valued: Kahoot, Jamboard, Padlet Wall, Ed-Puzzle, Mentimeter, and Coggle, among others.

Mykytka et al. (2022) emphasise that the Educaplay platform provides several available resources that can help learners get involved in synchronous and asynchronous practices. For these practices to take place, platforms can build appealing and competitive contexts such as gaming and tasks like riddles, crossword puzzles, word search puzzles, ABC games, memory games, dictations, quizzes, video quizzes, map quizzes, interactive maps, and matching games, and so on. In addition, some platforms, such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Moodle, and Blackboard, help develop activities that can be integrated into web pages or blogs.

Veljković (2017) also argues that all games generally offer features in which learners are willing to perform a task within a set timeframe and guidelines actively. This involvement puts learners in an exciting and engaging environment. Given this, gaming is an essential tool in the learning process for all ages, whereas memorising information repeatedly is not so effective for learning. Through gaming applications, learners change their attitudes in class, boost their emotions and motivation, reduce their tiredness, get actively involved, and enjoy the learning process. Kahoot is considered an elemental educational tool that addresses gaming-based learning to keen learners, raises their learning interest and attention, and promotes autonomous learning by presenting, checking previous content, and assessing learners' knowledge.

Manipatruni et al. (2023) highlight that 'Quizizz' is an online learning platform that offers encouraging tests, involving learners actively by giving immediate feedback

on their responses. It keeps up interest and encourages them to test themselves and compete among classmates, creating a positive and dynamic environment where learners have fun acquiring the language.

In addition, Google Forms is a digital learning application used for assessing activities such as surveys, quizzes or tests with the integration of 'AutoProctor', a tool that can monitor learners during the development of the tests and prevent learners from copying responses from their peers. Given this, Saleh Alharbi et al. (2021) consider Google Forms to be an elemental tool that improves learners' understanding and self-confidence. It is suitable for assessing a learner's learning progress. It has been observed that when using Google Forms for assessment, applying techniques that reduce cheating is essential.

Carrió-Pastor (2022b) emphasises that multi-modal meta discourse is currently considered an alternative for teaching practices in both English as a Foreign Language and English for Academic Purposes. This approach proves beneficial for Spanish-speaking learners, aiding their understanding of complex academic writings through digitised materials that combine textual and visual communication on a platform.

This serves as a means of providing coherence and cohesion in a corpus for learners and researchers. In a study conducted with engineering learners, the findings demonstrated that activities involving multi-modal meta discourse, encompassing both textual and visual devices, are highly beneficial for students.

However, university learners emphasised ensuring these activities closely relate to daily contexts. In addition, the most commonly used tools to support their learning include the language management system, file sharing/collaborative and internet search tools and online video and academic resources. One could argue that students' technology tools and applications to support their learning could be more sophisticated in nature and research. (Dowling-Hetherington et al., 2020, p.36)

According to Van and Thuy (2020), mobile devices are becoming multimedia access tools, connectivity tools, capture tools, and presentation and analysis tools

that offer advantageous features for teaching and learning. These authors emphasise how to encourage students' motivation, improve their sense of responsibility, increase their commitment and, in general, support their learning. Also, the teaching and reinforcement of the English language helps increase the individual's organisational capacity and ability to self-regulate learning.

Besides, Desta et al. (2021) highlight that interaction through ICT tools, computers, and mobile applications such as Facebook and Twitter makes students more active in their lives. In contrast, students from countries where English is a foreign language have changed their views on learning and communication technology.

Social networks provide a number of platforms that help students create and collect ideas and interact with a large audience. The types of learning that help students learn English and gain English proficiency through the use of new technologies (for example, Facebook, wikis, etc.) are possible learning methods.

To Ariantini et al. (2021) not all social networks are used as a learning method, especially in learning English. Similarly, the practice of EFL is used on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp, although it is partially implemented, leaving part of its potential intact. However, there is a lack of studies looking at the use of YouTube videos to improve student grammar despite the many videos on grammar usage and support for the device's spell-checking feature.

Younis & Hatim (2021) argue that social media platforms can be considered an extracurricular strategy and can successfully influence learning English in Language contexts in class and out of class. This possibility is provided for EFL students thanks to emerging technologies and widespread smartphone usage. In addition, platforms such as Instagram and TikTok might raise learners' motivation and interest in EFL classrooms, improve their English Language learning, and enable informal Language communication skills. Besides, Michos & Zorbas (2023) emphasise that TikTok impacts the learner's cognitive language and provides information on the use of this platform as an educational tool.

Based on Terzioğlu and Kurt (2022), using e-learning in language learning programs has been the subject of extensive research: 95% of MALL's quantitative

studies published in the last 30 years point to English as the most learned language. In addition, linguistic activities allow learning outside the classroom through multimedia, such as mobile devices like tablets, computers, and smartphones.

These studies that deal with the analysis of e-learning contribute to the improvement of the educational process on online platforms. The studies aim at measuring high levels of quality of the materials, interaction, self-reflection, timely content, and reminders between students and teachers. They facilitate collaborative learning and improve language skills. The LMS acts as an open-source platform (Moodle), a commercial portal (Blackboard) or an accessible learning environment (Edmodo).

Based on research developed about the internet and e-learning, it is possible to say that Web 2.0 tools open the door to content creation, collaboration, communication and interaction, and allow students to use linguistic features that go beyond their prior knowledge. In this way, students can receive valuable online feedback that helps them improve their listening and speaking skills. Listening tasks can be linked to videos so that language clips can be used to stimulate enthusiasm for learning English (Terzioğlu & Kurt, 2022).

Iglesias-Pradas et al. (2021) examine differences in learners' outcomes for face-to-face, blended, and online learning, which has been a central topic in educational research for decades. However, as the number of virtual courses increases, it has been tested how students achieve better results in online learning than in face-to-face learning. These studies should be known by the community of teachers and students since one of the purposes of these kinds of comparisons is to help understand the role of FLL in higher education.

Mohand Cherif & Al Aufo (2023) develop research on technological tools for learning and argue that Kaizena is a useful one in EFL educational processes. This tool is used in higher education Institutions for both synchronous and asynchronous modes. The findings indicate that this tool can effectively cater to audio feedback in a wide range of environments, adapting materials to fit learners' learning preferences and pace.

Tadesse and Muluye (2020) consider that, thanks to research in the use of technology for teaching, it has been possible to know that access to a computer and the Internet is the foundation of successful distance learning. In addition, staff and faculty must be familiar with online learning platforms. Teachers have difficulties in the area of technology and a lack of infrastructure. The closure of schools in which students have to attend classes and the introduction of distance learning leaves students with less time to study, stress and a lack of motivation to study.

After some years of using technology for education and specifically for EFL, it is necessary to provide information on what students who have faced both academic contexts think. Since the purpose of this study is to provide information and apply strategies and activities for the use of technology in blended learning approaches for EFL learning, the research design of this study is presented in the following section.

7. METHODOLOGY

This study explores recent experiences and innovative practices in educational research. It is based on a blended learning approach that integrates different strategies, materials and emergent digital tools, with the aim of generating reliable results, identifying difficulties, and suggesting solutions. This section provides information on the research paradigm and method, the participants, the instruments used to collect the information, as well as the analysis of data that is provided for the interpretation of results.

7.1 Research Paradigm

This study follows a mixed methods paradigm in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected for later interpretation. Statistical data corresponds to the quantitative elements that are collected in the study. Data that is related to observation guides and surveys corresponds to the qualitative data for the analysis stage.

7.2 Research Design

The design selected for this study corresponds to a descriptive design. This design is followed because it permits the use of both qualitative and quantitative data to collect and analyse the data obtained in the study. The instruments used in this study are part of a descriptive design of research in education, especially in the field of EFL learning.

7.3 Research Method

Action Research is selected as the method to develop this study. This method provides the opportunity for the teacher to apply his/her own research in the classroom. The analysis of the topic related to the blended learning approach provides an insight to develop action research since practical topics such as the application of blended learning work for students as an alternative to improve L2

interaction. Quantitative and qualitative data can be collected by means of an action research method in this study.

7.4. Participants and Instruments for Data Collection

This study included participants and instruments such as pre- and post-tests, two surveys and an observation checklist. The instruments employed in this research were pre-and post-tests, observation classroom checklists and two surveys for data collection. The purpose of applying these instruments was to assess the experimental and control groups' background and progress, and to evaluate the overall impact of the blended learning approach in enhancing English language acquisition.

7.4.1. Participants

A total of sixty-one learners participated in this study. Table 4 presents the categories of participants involved in the research. They were divided into two groups: the experimental and the control group. The experimental group was composed of 29 learners who experienced blended learning environments. The control group included 32 learners who were taught using traditional methods. In the experimental group, there were nineteen female learners and ten male learners, and their ages were in a range of 19 to 24 years old, whereas in the control group, there were thirty female learners and two male learners, and their ages were in a range from 21 to 28 years old. All of them belonged to the Generation Z range.

Table 4 Participants: learners of the Journalism school.

Typology	F	%
Experimental group	29	47.54
Control group	32	52.46
Total	61	100

Further, both the experimental and control groups attended the third year of Journalism school at the University of Babahoyo in Ecuador; however, in different modalities, which means in the morning schedule, the experimental group attended school, and in the afternoon, the control group was present at school.

Additionally, a group of 15 EFL professors with professional experience in a range of five- or six-year teaching English in Ecuador's higher education centres were included in this research to gain deeper insights into the benefits or difficulties that learners face in blended learning settings. These professors combine the best practices of traditional and online learning methods with the primary use of technology. All of them had a master's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and three of them have been principals of Language centres. Besides, 14 were among 35 to 40 years of age, and only an educator was 55. It meant most belong to the millennial generation and one to the Generation X.

7.4.2. Instruments

Pre-test and Post-test

The pre-test analyses the prior knowledge and skills of the experimental and control groups. It was organised into five sections: grammar and vocabulary, reading, listening, writing and speaking with multiple choice options (see Annexes 2 and 3). Moreover, a brief interview was conducted with students to assess both groups of learners' English language communication skills. The pre-test questionnaire was created from face-to-face and cutting-edge books and the Test-English website, which are part of the subject syllabus bibliography references.

On the other hand, the post-test was designed to gauge the experimental group's English language proficiency after implementing the blended learning approach in this term of study (see Annex 3). Besides, it was also conducted in the control group with the same post-test to analyse both groups' English language enhancement. It was constituted by 5 sections related to the content developed during the experimentation. It was also based on the pre-test format to evaluate grammar, vocabulary, and communicative language skills. There were 17 questions, of which three assessed reading and three listening comprehensions, seven were related to grammar and vocabulary, one was directed to assess writing, and three of them tested speaking.

Classroom observation checklist

Classroom observations were further employed to assess the experimental group's perceptions towards the practical application of blended learning strategies (see Annex 4). The indicators in the observation guide included, for instance, physical setting means in which the classroom layout spaces were observed in relation to how they encourage the learning environment. Another aspect is the observation of educators' instructional strategies to activate experimental group learning processes. An additional section deals with technology integration to observe the experimental group engagement and interaction. A final category relates to the assessment of the influence of the experimental group feedback to highlight key ideas. Each category was rated by means of a Likert scale from 1 to 5; number 5 represents the highest option and number 1 the lowest option.

Surveys

Furthermore, two surveys were designed to support this research. One was conducted to evaluate experimental group insights about the employment of blended learning experiences (see Annex 6), which was based on Community of Inquiry (COL). This is a framework based on a collaborative and constructivist model, which identifies key elements for a successful online learning experience in higher education (Castellanos-Reyes, 2020). According to Martin et al. (2022) The Community of Inquiry (COL) framework is essential to assess learners' perceptions based on the impact of blended learning contexts, emphasising three elements: cognitive, social, and faculty presence. The perceptions of learners who have been using blended learning in higher education are important for this study. They were asked about how they perceive this approach to EFL learning, integrating actual learning, how they perceive learning, and how satisfied they are.

Martin et al. (2022) highlight that teaching presence maintains a positive correlation with effective learning. Cognitive presence contributes to improved perceptions of learning. Social presence moderately influences satisfaction within online and blended learning environments. Sen-Akbulut et al. (2022) assert that institutions which participate in this kind of research endeavour emphasise the need to know about what students think about what they experience in the classroom. It is important to know about the value of maintaining open communication with

faculty, fostering student community building, and promoting peer interaction. Also, it is important to know about the fact that social presence and active class participation increased when the course design was collaborative between the instructor and students. By contrast, the learners demonstrate greater cognitive presence when the educators provide authentic content and tools.

Due to the importance of research in the field of students' perceptions of their own educational context in relation to EFL, this study bases its inquiry on face-to-face classes in English and blended learning interactions.

To validate the learner's satisfaction with the language acquisition through the Alpha Cronbach analysis from the software IBM SPSS ¹Statistics. It was provided 15 pre-determined questions focusing on cognitive, social, and faculty presence with a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where number 1 means very negative, and number 5 means very positive. Apart from that, questions were related to examining the learners' preferences towards skills, communicative activities and digital tools.

Among those tools, the survey included educational digital tools that worked as fundamental resources to check the effectiveness of the blended learning approach. These tools were reviewed in the literature section of this paper. For example, gamification apps were used during the experimentation stage. Some digital platforms, such as Mentimeter, Educaplay, Quizizz, Kahoot, Moodle, Google Forms and social networks like WhatsApp and TikTok, were also provided for the development of the study. Genially, GoConqr and Wordwall apps were integrated as supporting digital tools since they were used previously, during the lockdown period in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another survey was conducted on EFL educators who have taught in higher education institutions (see Annex 5). In this survey, there were semi-structured questions combining a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where number 1 means very low, and number 5 means high. Open-ended questions were also provided. It is important to consider that Survey/questionnaire techniques are effective and

¹ IBM Corp (2025). IBM SPSS Statistics (version 31). <http://bit.ly/4n7wqqk>.

meaningful tools to gather specific data for research and evaluation purposes, as based on Taherdoost (2019). Additionally, the Likert scale is considered an attitudinal scale that measures the agreement of people's viewpoints about a target study. It commonly focuses on frequency scales from performing a task, according to Robinson (2023).

7.5. The Development of the Study

This section explains the different stages during the research process in which data collection and analysis are presented.

7.5.1. Research Methods

To develop the primary research question of this study, a research framework was designed to assess the effectiveness of implementing a blended learning approach in higher education for enhancing English language proficiency among learners. According to Makhado et al. (2022), descriptive research is essential to the advancement of education because it makes it easier to observe and describe characteristics of a population in an area of interest by carefully and closely observing the data provided by the evidence.

Consequently, this research adopted a descriptive design, which is mainly directed to describe the effectiveness of blended learning within higher education by the integration of e-learning and face-to-face learning strategies with the collaboration of digital platforms and traditional settings that are aligned to the line of research e-language learning from the computer-assisted language teaching group. It is needed to develop observation and pay attention to perceptions on enhancing language learning skills in students with the application of input classroom activities such as role-play, gaming, projects, presentations, etc.

Furthermore, this research framework focused on a mixed-method paradigm, which permits a comprehensive and practical analysis of the collected data. This paradigm encompasses qualitative and quantitative data, which are used to ensure the convergent validation of the acquired data—the integration of both approaches to

provide valid and insightful findings. Table 5 summarises the methodology employed for data collection and analysis, which reflects this mixed-method approach.

Table 5 Data processing: instruments and method

Instruments	Methods	Journalism school	
		Experimental group (Learner's age:19 to 24)	Control group (Learner's age:21 to 28)
Pre-test	Quantitative method	X	X
Classroom observation checklist	Qualitative method (supported by quantitative descriptions).	X	
Post-test	Quantitative method	X	X
Learner's Survey	Quantitative and Qualitative methods	X	
Educator's Survey	Quantitative and Qualitative methods		

The benefit of using a mixed research approach is the potential to greatly improve data collection and analysis, as noted by Fraenkel et al. (2015). A more varied range of data is available to researchers, something that would be impossible to achieve when depending only on one research methodology. Besides, Taherdoost (2022) emphasises that employing a mixed-method enables researchers to develop in-depth studies from various fields because they encompass complex data that help to address meaningful findings.

Nassaji (2020) discusses the trustworthiness principles of qualitative research based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) theory, which involves 'credibility', which refers to the accuracy and integrity of the findings and conclusions. This paradigm helps to show the real context of the phenomenon in the study. Thus, for a better comprehension of the problem, it is necessary to use a triangulation analysis of

several data gathering methods, resources, understandings or perceptions. Another principle is ‘transferability’ in qualitative research, which refers to evaluating the applicability of experts’ understandings and descriptions in other contexts with similar environments.

In addition to this, ‘dependability’ in qualitative studies emphasises that all activities, descriptions, viewpoints, data, and findings of research should be documented in order for outside experts to review the accuracy of the study and provide similar conclusions. In contrast, quantitative studies are an option for trustworthiness for the data collection tools. Table 6 presents the framework designed to gather the information for the main Research Question addressed in the study.

Table 6 Data collection techniques and instruments.

General Research Question	How effective is the use of the Blended Learning approach in enhancing English as Foreign Language skills in university learners?
Paradigm	Mixed
Collection instrument	Pre-test (the starting point to explore the learner’s needs) Post-test (the ending point to explore the learner’s language acquisition)
Source	2 Questionaries
Sample	29 experimental group / 32 control group

Table 6 shows the main Research Question of this study linked to the method and the instruments, which state two fundamental elements. The pre-test permits the analysis of the learner’s needs prior to the application of the blended learning approach, and also the post-test, which permits the verification of the learner’s language learning to support the results of this study. Both instruments were evaluated through a quantitative paradigm due to the fact that they got numbers, but also features in the speaking production through the use of a rubric. Table 7 outlines the structure for collecting data related to the Research Question 1.

Table 7 Data collection research question 1.

Research Question 1	What factors benefit the learning process of English as a Foreign Language in university students when faced with blended learning environments?
Paradigm	Qualitative paradigm
Collection instrument	Classroom Observation Checklist
Source	Checklist
Sample	29 experimental group

In Table 7, Research Question 1 is aligned to the factors that support the learning process and was developed through checklists used in classroom observations. This instrument was useful to take notes about the experimental group students' behaviour, interaction, and responding processes during the different blended learning environments, which responds to the qualitative method.

Table 8 presents a summary of the data gathered in relation to Research Question 2.

Table 8 Data collection Research Question 2.

Research Question 2	What sort of strategies can be developed to facilitate the English learning process by means of a blended learning approach in higher education students?
Paradigm	Quantitative and Qualitative Paradigms
Collection instrument	Survey Observation checklist (supporting item)
Source	Questionnaire (semi-structured questions)
Sample	15 EFL educators, Higher Education Institution - Ecuador

Research Question 2 got the results from a survey administered to EFL educators. This question was analysed based on their teaching experiences in higher education institutions against the current emergent learning contexts. The questions were semi-structured to gather features and numerical data about the experimental group's learning strategy preferences. Apart from that, the data registered from the observation checklists contributed to reinforcing the educators' viewpoints. Both results were aligned to a qualitative and quantitative paradigm.

Table 9 summarises the data collection framework for Research Question 3.

Table 9 Data collection research question 3.

Research question 3	How do university students perceive the effectiveness of the blended learning approach applied during the implementation of this study for the learning process?
Paradigm	Quantitative and Qualitative Paradigms
Collection instrument	Survey
Source	Questionnaire (semi-structured questions)
Sample	29 experimental group (predefined questions)

Research Question 3 was developed through the perception survey conducted with the experimental group about the effectiveness of the blended learning approach application. The learner's viewpoints were key to providing important features aligned with the mixed research paradigm.

Procedure framework

To conduct this study, first, there was a need to decide on the population and sample of participants to be involved in this study. There was a preliminary stage in which the researcher decided on factors such as age and field of study. Thus, two preliminary groups of university learners who belonged to the same age range and the same year of study were chosen. There was also the need to identify the level of English proficiency. A pre-test exam was designed based on the syllabus goals and contents from the previous and current years. The format of the tests used was adapted to this study.

Since students have learnt content from Face-to-Face² and Cutting-Edge³ English books, which provide appealing and meaningful content to contribute to the development and enhancement of the learners' language skills. These contents were considered in the design of the pre-test. A sample of one of the books used

² Greenwood, et al. (2005). Face-to Face. CAMBRIDGE PRESS. <http://bit.ly/4krrBGp>

³ Cunningham, S. (2005). *New Cutting-edge. Pearson. <http://bit.ly/3IsXK33>

here can be found in the following link: <http://bit.ly/3IsXK33>. Besides, the Test-English ⁴website is also part of this reference, and it is considered appropriate due to the fact that it offers English language assessment formats that show similar services and products to those the Cambridge website provides. It is also important to consider that these websites provide quality resources that learners can use to improve and assess their English Language skills. They constitute a rich source of materials in the sense that they provide placement tests aligned to International Language standards from the United States and England.

Pre-test

The pre-test questionnaire was designed with 12 multiple-choice questions, and only one correct answer was possible. It was administered to both groups on the Moodle platform. In the test, there were seven questions about grammar and vocabulary, two questions about listening, two questions about reading and one question about writing. Each question was given to assess the learner's cognitive level and background knowledge based on the previously learned content, and also aligned to the A2 CEFR English language level.

The main grammar in the test included the difference between past simple and present perfect tenses, and past simple versus past progressive, as grammar is practised again during the experimental research stage. Vocabulary questions were aimed at exploring the learner's knowledge about journalism terminology already studied in class. Table 10 presents a sample multiple-choice item from the grammar section of the pre-test.

Table 10 A pre-determined question from the grammar section of the pre-test.

Question	Criteria	CEFR Level
<i>My friend and I _____ for BBC News for a long time.</i>	a. have worked b. worked c. has worked	A2 Refers to life experiences with vocabulary related to the learner's field of

⁴ Illadelsbous. (n.d.). *Test-English*. Take your learning with you! <https://test-english.com/>

In Table 10, it is visible that two out of three alternatives were the wrong options given; one included the auxiliary verb **have** in plural plus the verb in past participle and another one contained the verb **have** in singular. In this case, it was related to present perfect statement options and the verb to connect the main idea that works in the past simple tense. This means that learners have to identify the difference between reading the whole idea and focusing on the time expression to choose the right option. Table 11 presents another sample grammar item taken from the pre-test.

Table 11 A pre-determined question from the grammar section of the pre-test.

Question	Criteria	CEFR Level
<i>The editor ___ the headlines of the newspaper several times because he corrected spelling mistakes last night.</i>	a. adjusted b. have adjusted c. has adjusted	A2 Refers to past events with vocabulary related to the learner's field of study.

Table 11 presents the same idea in the previous example, though it was given with only one correct answer out of three options to measure learners' comprehension of the difference in this grammar tense. To discard the present perfect options, learners should read the whole idea and focus on the time expression to differentiate them.

In the vocabulary assessment, questions were designed to revise content related to the area of study and general content. It was integrated to explore the ideas, when the vocabulary learnt was used in a variety of contexts, which were understandable to them. Words like *the story, broadcast, broadsheet, tabloid, social media, print media, and communication* were provided.

Table 12 shows a sample multiple-choice item from the vocabulary section of the pre-test.

Table 12 A pre-determined question from the vocabulary section of the pre-test.

Question	Criteria
_____ is a news article or report.	a. story b. broadsheet c. tabloid

Table 12 shows a pre-determined question that assesses the learner's language acquisition about specific terminology related to the field of study defined in the syllabus content as a prerequisite.

In listening, an audio of a conversation between a woman and a man was used to talk about their food preferences while ordering in a restaurant. It is a topic that was included as part of the unit contents reviewed in the learning process and aligned to the descriptions of the A2 CEFR English language level. Further, this text shows a simple interaction between the man and the woman with short ideas and familiar vocabulary, but essential clues that make it clear (see Annex 2). For instance, when asked: *Are you a vegetarian? Do you like fruit and vegetables? How much coffee do you drink a day?* And their answers were *No, I'm not; Vegetables are OK, but I can't stand fruit; I drink a cup at home before I go to work. Then, I drink some more coffee at work.* It is possible to observe that short context helps students answer the questions.

Table 13 shows a sample item from the listening section of the pre-test.

Table 13 A pre-determined question from the listening section of the pre-test.

Question	Criteria	CEFR Level
<i>How much coffee does the man drink a day?</i>	a. 3 cups b. 4 cups c. 2 cups	A2

Table 13 demonstrates that the questions stated to evaluate listening comprehension were designed with the aim to align cyclically with the other sections, such as vocabulary, grammar, speaking and writing.

The reading was a short story aligned to the A2 CEFR English language level due to the fact that the text showed fictitious and specific ideas with basic vocabulary and assessed comprehension with two alternative options that were *true* or *false*. The learners identified specific data without production. Apart from that, the text was related to the content studied previously and was also connected to the grammar questions sections (see Annex 2). Besides, it facilitated the learners to identify the keywords easily by scanning because of the short text. Table 14 describes samples of the reading section included in the pre-test.

Table 14 A pre-determined question from the reading section of the pre-test.

Question	Criteria	CEFR LEVEL
<i>There are few miles of beach but a lot of starfish.</i>	a. true b. false	A2
<i>The starfish can survive out of the ocean.</i>	a. true b. false	A2

It evidences that the ideas were connected with the grammar learned previously using quantifiers. The sentences presented contained basic vocabulary about countable and uncountable nouns.

The writing task asked learners to describe themselves, their lifestyles, and their plans, which connected to the questions given in the speaking test. In writing, a rubric was used that provided clear ideas about learners' language proficiency levels which is shown in Table 15.

Table 15 Rubric used to assess the writing section of the pre-test.

Aspects	Criteria
The writing is built around a purpose.	Great

The writing makes sense.	0.31 – 0.40
All part of the text belongs.	Good
The writing is well-organised.	0.21 – 0.30
Use correct punctuation.	Fair
Use correct capitalisation.	0.11 – 0.20
Spelling.	

For example, Table 15 shows that in writing, the elements to assess students were the purpose of the topic, coherence and cohesion, punctuation marks, spelling and a good organisation of ideas.

In speaking, the criteria for assessment were vocabulary and content, language, pronunciation, and fluidity. (see Annex 2). Table 16 shows the rubric employed to evaluate students' speaking performance.

Table 16 Rubric used to assess the speaking section of the pre-test.

Aspects	Criteria
Content and Vocabulary (e.g. verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word order)	Great
Language (e.g. verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word order)	Satisfactory
	Needs Improvement
Pronunciation (e.g. individual sounds, stress, intonation)	Below – Does Not Meet Expectations
Fluency and Communicative Ability (e.g. pace, flow, on topic, ease of speaking)	

Table 16 evidences that experimental and control groups were assessed over 4 criteria to analyse the learners' needs before the application of the blended learning approach. Both the writing and speaking rubrics were adapted from websites that provide these sorts of resources to help assess communicative language skills accurately. For instance, the writing rubric was taken from IXL Learning (2023) and the speaking rubric was Djancintesl-TEFL (2023).

Proposal communicative activities

These activities for this proposal were adapted for the blended learning approach, combining both face-to-face sessions and digital platforms such as lectures, discussions, peer work, projects, and gaming. There was also the integration of online content like videos, podcasts, texts, assignments, gamification, quizzes, and interactive activities from apps. The language learning strategies were developed through MALL, CALL, and MOOCs, and the educational tools used were Mentimeter, Educaplay, Quizizz, Kahoot, Moodle, Google Forms, Genially, WordWall, GoConqr, WhatsApp and TikTok.

At this stage, it was essential to analyse the goal of the subject syllabus, which is defined by the contents of the units. It also lists the digital resources and materials in order to create activities in collaboration with the hybrid method, with the purpose of improving the experimental group's communicative language skills. Given the viewpoints beforehand, the following data showed how the activities were administered to the experimental and control group students.

Experimental group activities

As an initial activity, a vocabulary task was planned. It included a pre-discussion cognitive priming exercise in which the students from the experimental group collaborated to complete a word web graph using a SmartScreen whiteboard. This activity could be developed online or offline in order to explore the domain of the topic to stimulate a class discussion. For instance, Figure 1 illustrates a WordWeb example in a class discussion.

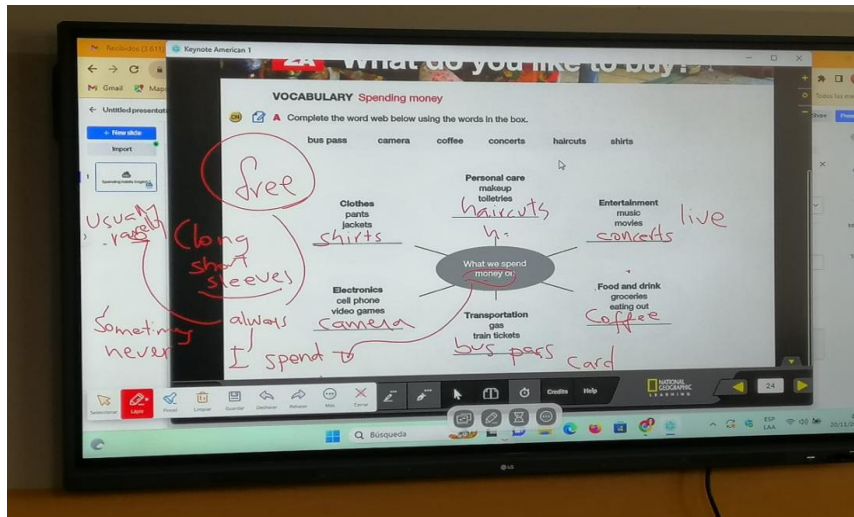


Figure 1 Class discussion about Spending Money through WordWeb using a SmartScreen whiteboard.

To assess the lexicon learnt, the 'Mentimeter' tool was applied to motivate a deeper engagement. Here, the experimental group was asked to type three relevant words seen previously. Figure 2 shows the interaction of the students of a topic through Mentimeter word clouds tool.

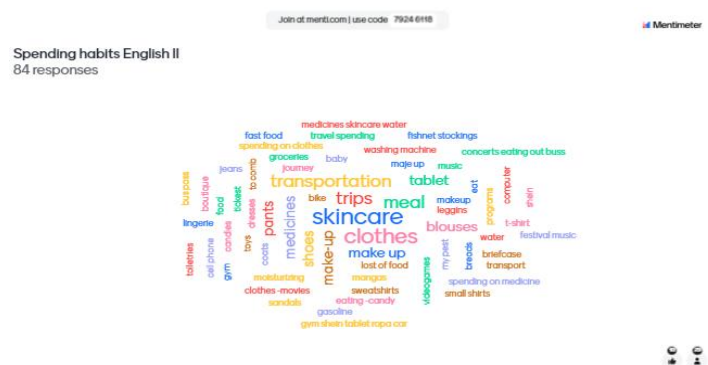


Figure 2 Class discussion about Spending Money through the Mentimeter word clouds tool.

To engage the experimental group in speaking, they were strategically organised into smaller groups of five students each. They were asked to create a comprehensive music preference survey of 4 closed questions, each with three alternative options, using WhatsApp.

Figure 3 illustrates experimental group interaction in a groupwork activity through WhatsApp.



Figure 3 Survey by using WhatsApp.

Students had to share this survey with the rest of the general class groups. It was designed to promote collaborative oral communication and skills within each group and develop social interaction with technological integration through this digital material, emphasising teamwork. Once all groups completed the surveys, they had to summarise the main ideas based on the data gathered and briefly provide feedback.

Figure 4 shows the experimental group engaging in an oral presentation where they share the results of the survey conducted through Google Forms.



Figure 4 Presentation of the survey results.

This lively survey raised experimental learners' interests in the classroom, showing enthusiastic participation and underscoring the success of this dynamic speaking

practice.

Regarding reading, the experimental group engaged in the comprehension of texts within different learning environments. The reading activities focused on the application of pre-during-post reading strategies. They were defined for a variety of instructional settings, including listening while reading the text, speaking or writing after reading the text. The text sets used were very often related to the vocabulary contents, and the experimental group of learners were able to identify some words in the text accurately. Besides, the grammar content was also linked to the ideas in the text.

The reading activity was first shown on the smart screen whiteboard. Also, learners were given a supplementary handout ensuring optimal readability to lead the pre-reading stage, exploring the grasp of the text and highlighting the keywords during the reading. Then, a quiz to assess the experimental group's understanding was administered to the learners through the Google Forms tool. They got access to this tool via their smartphones in order for them to get immediate access and choose their answers, get quick responses and feedback showcasing correct and incorrect responses, with total scores arranged in descending order, thus prominently displaying the highest scores.

In the following figure 5, it presents a reading passage in which the experimental group complete comprehension questions using a Google Forms questionnaire.

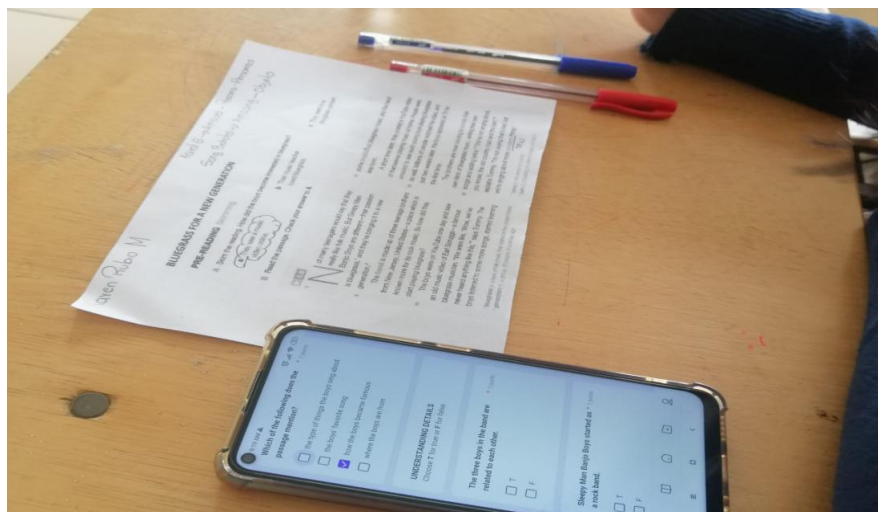


Figure 5 Reading comprehension activity using the Google Forms tool.

In the context of listening, a comprehensive approach was employed for the experimental group; students could apply pre-during-post listening strategies to enhance their proficiency in this skill.

Figure 6 illustrates the experimental group of students' interaction as they complete a listening task while listening to an audio file and answering a questionnaire shared via WhatsApp.

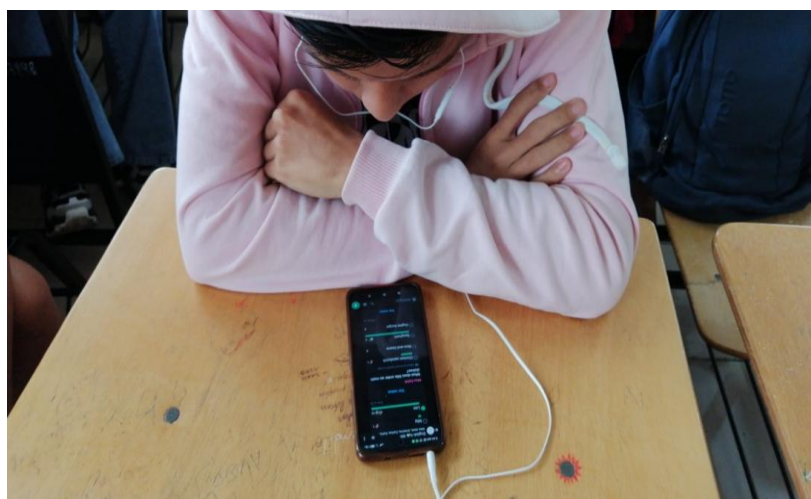


Figure 6 Listening activity using a survey through the WhatsApp tool.

An audio was shared with the experimental group through the WhatsApp class group. The audio provided a conversation between a couple of friends that could be repeated as many times as they desired. Thus, learners used their smartphones and earplugs or headphones to engage in this listening activity within the classroom. A survey containing four closed questions and three alternative options was created through WhatsApp so the learners could compare their responses and provide guidance to the students who were lost in the activity.

Developing writing skills was a focal point for the experimental group in the classroom. A forum activity was conducted for the experimental group through the use of Google Forms. They had to articulate their ideas involving the grammar and vocabulary used to describe the main topic.

Figure 7 shows how students participate in a writing task developed as a forum activity using Google Forms to foster collaborative interaction.

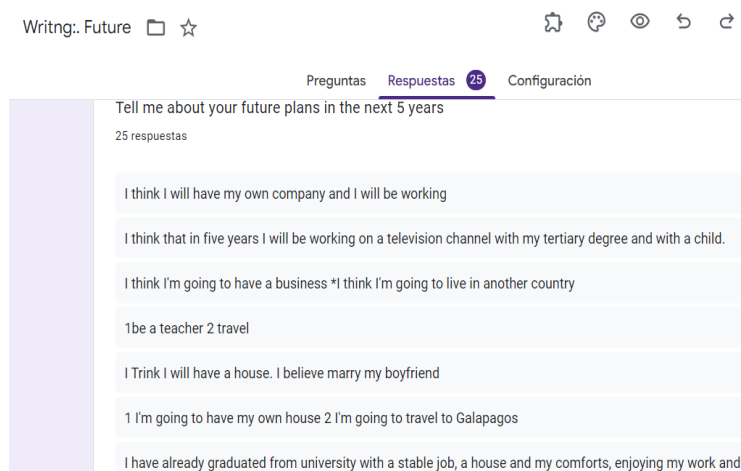


Figure 7 Writing activity in class using the Google Forms tool as a forum.

As we could see, another alternative digital tool is *WhatsApp*, which was used in other writing activities to see the learners' instant ideas to discuss a topic and give feedback on vocabulary, coherence, spelling mistakes, and punctuation marks, among others.

The QR Codes app was also employed in writing tasks to allow the experimental group students to work collectively in small groups and use their smartphones to scan the codes. Figure 8 presents the experimental group scanning QR codes to access hidden ideas or texts used to complete a writing task. They retrieved pertinent data that was transcribed onto paper. The subsequent phase involved a shared presentation where each group articulated their findings to foster a comprehensive understanding among peers.

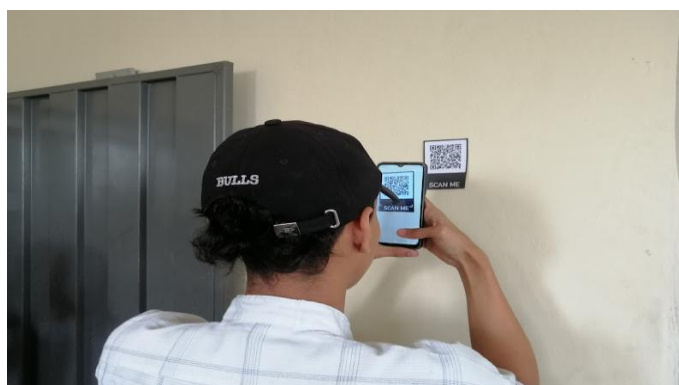


Figure 8 Writing activity in class using the QR codes tool.

In addition to the activities described above, this study incorporated supplementary digital tools such as Quizizz, Kahoot, GoConqr, Educaplay, Wordwall, Liveworksheet, Crossword Labs and Wheel-of-names for reinforcing grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening and reading comprehension skills. For instance, figure 9 illustrates the experimental group's interaction while practising grammar through an interactive quiz using the Quizizz tool. See more activities in Annexe 7.



Figure 9 Practical exercise to reinforce grammar statement using the Quizizz tool.

Control group activities

The activities designed to be applied with the control group were focused on traditional learning settings that learners experienced in class. For instance, one of the instructional sessions was writing on a whiteboard to provide a list of vocabulary related to the topic. This input activity helped to introduce vocabulary and the pre-reading or listening topic.

Speaking and writing practices were provided during the application of the study for the control group. This was teamwork in which the control group wrote down a list of words in a minute on a sticky note. This vocabulary was studied in class the previous day. Then, the control group students took part in an interactive survey within the classroom, querying their classmates' diverse music genre preferences. Figure 10 illustrates how the control group interacting with their peers in a speaking

activity by asking questions to gather information for a classroom survey.

The activity involved a dynamic approach in which learners of the control group moved around the classroom as music played, and they could only initiate insightful questions when the music paused. They wrote down their classmate's answers, and then, after an internal discussion, the groups shared the answers with the class, highlighting the key ideas and providing feedback.



Figure 10 Speaking activity in class, taking notes.

Figure 11 illustrates how the control group presents the survey results to their classmates using markers and a card, demonstrating the outcome of their group work activity. Each learner explained the marks as well as the positive and negative ideas found.



Figure 11 Presentation of the survey results.

The work related to reading materials was developed based on texts selected for vocabulary identification. A connection was also evident between the grammatical content covered and the ideas expressed in the texts. Figure 12 shows how the control group approached the activity with traditional handouts, which included peer assessment elements to encourage collaborative learning.

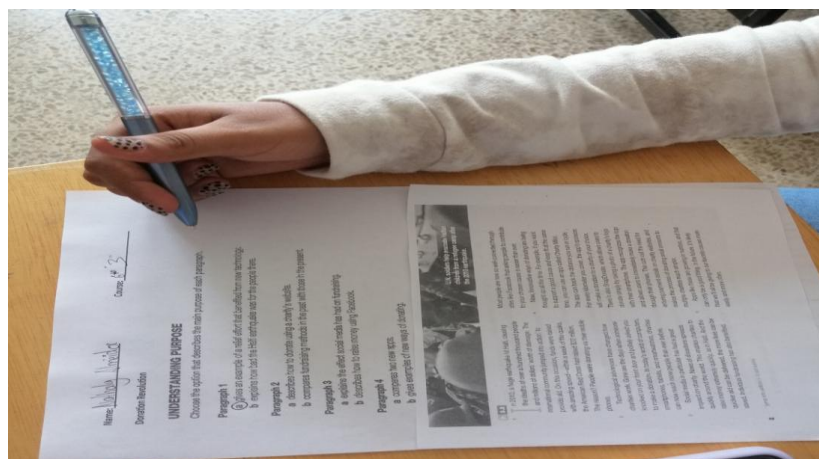


Figure 12 Reading comprehension activity in class.

After completing the task, students compared answers with their peers. These activities provided students and teachers from the experimental group with the opportunity to evaluate, validate and discuss the correct answers.

In relation to the listening skill development, the control group students experienced a similar listening activity as the one provided to the experimental group, yet with a notable difference: they were given a handout. Furthermore, the professor determined the number of audio repetitions.

The control group also engaged in writing tasks developed in a more traditional approach. They followed instructions, and then they used pencil and paper for their writing. When finished, the learners exchanged their compositions to conduct a peer review in order to identify errors and assess coherence. Subsequently, the professor provided constructive feedback, adding valuable guidance to the learning process.

Control and experimental group complementary activities

Both the control group and experimental group topics and activities were aligned with the syllabus program. Both the experimental and control groups took a practical hour in the computer laboratory. The purpose was for them to use the book platforms to provide a holistic reinforcement of their listening, reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills. These synchronous activities complement the content being developed in class, which, in turn, facilitates language acquisition. Both platforms were used by students to offer interactive learning activities in grammar, vocabulary, listening, and reading by filling in the gaps or choosing the right option. While speaking, learners were able to record their answers to check their utterances. Figure 13 shows an activity from the digital learning platform that both groups of learners complete during their laboratory session.



Figure 13 Evidence of computing lab communicative activity performed through the New cutting-edge platform for experimental and control groups.

Virtual classes

During the development of the study, there was an administrative problem at the institution where the experimental group and the control group were participating in the study. Students from the experimental group had to take virtual classes for one week to continue with the academic term. Therefore, it was essential to design e-learning activities which might support meaningful insights about the adaptability

of this hybrid method, integrating only e-resources for English language acquisition. For example, Figure 14 shows an activity created in Genially to promote the experimental group interaction during the virtual class.

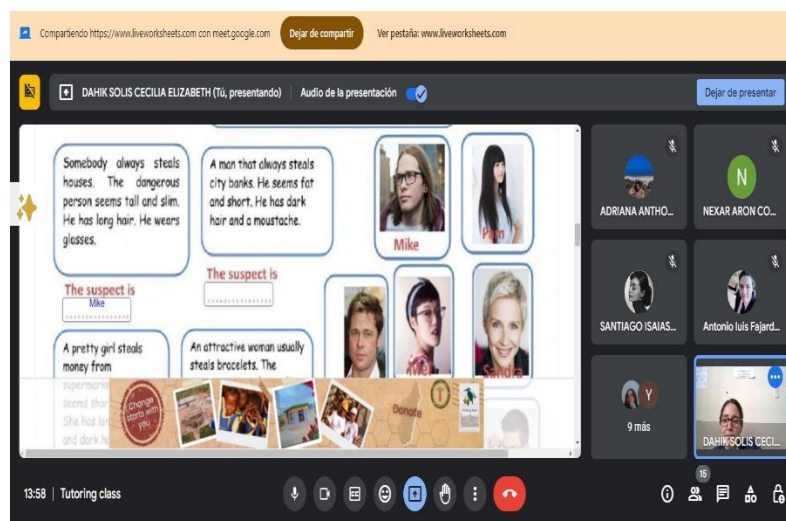


Figure 14 Evidence of online class for the experimental group during one week.

Zoom was the platform for learners to access the online class, while Genially helped the researcher to plan the online class presentations to allow the experimental group to interact and describe visual data. Gamification was also applied by means of apps to encourage the learners in language learning environments such as Quizizz, Kahoot, and live worksheets, among others.

During the assessment session, observation checklists were further employed with a 5-point rating scale in each class. The researcher took notes to assess the learner insights towards the classroom environment. The observation was also directed to check how students manage hybrid learning strategies, the use of e-learning tools, assessment, and feedback. This assessment instrument provided essential and practical information to support the first and second research questions in this study.

It is important to mention that tutoring sessions were given to both groups, experimental and control, to reinforce the language learning and acquisition processes in class. Nevertheless, the experimental group work was mainly designed and performed with the help of blended learning strategies to raise learners'

involvement, conducted through face-to-face or virtual sessions. Whereas the control group was administered the traditional activities through face-to-face classes. Figures 15 and 16 show how the tutoring sessions were conducted in virtual and classroom setting, respectively.

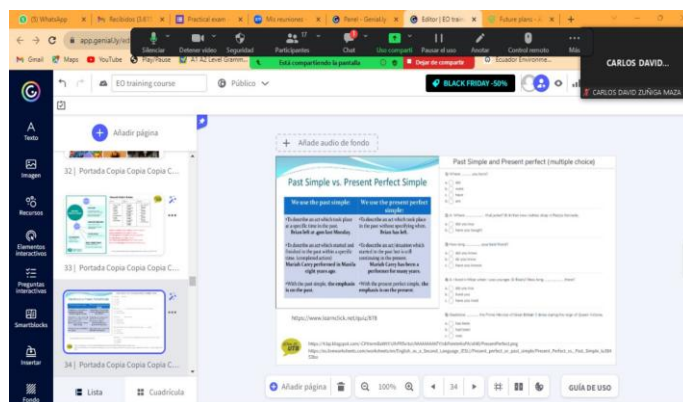


Figure 15 Tutoring online sessions using the Zoom app and the Genially tool.



Figure 16 Evidence of tutoring in a face-to-face class for the experimental group.

Students developed autonomous work, and all of the activities were registered in the institutional Moodle platform. As an example, it is possible to mention that the asynchronous activities were crafted to reinforce the content taught in classes which were provided through Moodle. This is a requirement of the University, so the learner's community have the contents at hand and the teachers can review learners' self-directed work and progress based on the content set in the syllabus. This is also a way by means of which the professor assesses students' work.

The activity instructions were provided in class for better guidance, even though they were written on the platform. In addition, the activities were programmed to

be completed in a week-long term, which allowed learners to get organised with low stress and more time to check their work before submissions.

It is essential to highlight that the experimental group was provided with corpus learning activities that applied to the blending learning approach. In contrast, the activities provided to the control group were designed to be developed only through face-to-face interaction.

Once all content and additional activities were developed, assessing experimental and control group students to check language learning and acquisition was essential. Thus, a post-test was administered to each student in order to check the progress in learning. This activity collects the information that provides data for the second and third research questions of this study. The test was designed with the same framework as the pre-test, in which grammar, vocabulary and communicative language skills are evaluated. It is possible to see some examples of these questions in the following section.

Post test

The questionnaire was designed to validate key content. It contained 17 questions with multiple-choice options. The test was administered to the experimental group through the Moodle platform in the computer lab. The questions were programmed to appear randomly in order to prevent cheating, and the results were more reliable. It is necessary to clarify that the control group was administered as a paper-and-pencil test. Here, for instance, the following examples show a brief explanation of each section of the test.

Grammar and vocabulary evaluation focused on the main contents that allowed learners to distinguish their English language proficiency stated in the syllabus goals. Table 17 shows a sample grammar item taken from the questionnaire of the post-test.

Table 17 A pre-determined question from the grammar section of the post-test.

Question	Criteria	CEFR Level
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<i>Tom___with John tonight.</i>	a. will probably meet.	B1
<i>They have planned it for</i>	b. might meet	Refers to the future tense based on degrees of certainty.
<i>days.</i>	c. will definitely meet	

In Table 17, the main idea in the sentence plays an important role in the correct grammatical use of the simple future tense of *will* and the word order of probability and definiteness usage. It also added a supporting idea that reinforces the first sentence which uses the present perfect tense. This example confirms the structure of a prediction.

Other examples follow:

- a. *Yesterday, Tom and Janice_____to the zoo around one. They_____many kinds of animals. They stayed at the zoo for two hours.*
- b. *Our community manager_____her social networks 15 times a day. Now, she checks them every 5 minutes.*
- c. *After they_____to the radio station, I_____on the script.*

The syntax of these sentences was addressed to evaluate comprehension of past tense grammatical structures, such as simple past tense, past progressive, used to, and past perfect. These structures are grammatical elements often used in narrative essays. As far as it is concerned, example *a* differs from *b* because it refers to past sequences of actions that happened at a specific time. In contrast, *b* focused on the 'used to' grammatical structure that refers to past habits that no longer happen. Similarly, example *c* is about the past perfect tense that describes the earlier time in which two past actions took place.

E.g.

_____ *I finish work, I will go home today.*

This sentence evaluates the learners' knowledge of syntax. This knowledge helps comprehension related to the order of actions to connect ideas to a point in time. It

is also part of the grammar content in the syllabus.

To assess reading, the contexts were taken from the book *Cutting-edge*, B1 CEFR level, which is a constituent part of the materials cited in this study. The text was chosen to test how students identify the gist of the text. This reading is a narrative developed in the past. This narrative includes the grammar and vocabulary seen in the syntactical structure of the sentences explained above. Furthermore, this content fits the informative question in the writing section, so the learners could see it as an example to create their narrative essay. Listening was also addressed in relation to past events linked to the grammar and content studied. The speaking section asked informative questions about an anecdote or experience. Students have to plan a change to finish the text so it fits the end of their anecdote or experience.

Perception survey

In the last stage, a survey was administered as another tool to support the topic of research in this study. The survey dealt with the perceptions of the students from the experimental group in relation to the improvement of English language skills by means of the blended learning strategies. The questionnaire was created through the Google Forms app, and the link was shared through the WhatsApp group that the students shared in order to get quick replies.

The questions were based on fundamental elements from the Community of Inquiry⁵ A framework to support the reliability and validity of the main research question of this study, demonstrating the hypothesis. Each question was analysed to identify the impact of blended learning on the students of the experimental group in relation to cognitive presence, social presence and teaching presence. Each presence was evaluated through a set of items from a Likert Scale. Five alternatives were presented. Then, the survey results were analysed through the method of reliability, Alpha de Cronbach, from SPSS software. Table 18 contains the format

⁵ Community of Inquiry. (s.f.). *CoI Survey*. Athabasca University. <https://coi.athabascau.ca/coi-model/coi-survey/>

of the survey.

Table 18 Questions correlation based on the community of inquiry model.

Pre-determined questions	Community of Inquiry correlation	Dimension
I felt comfortable communicating my ideas using technology in the learning process.	Social presence	Affective expression.
I felt comfortable interacting with my classmates.	Social presence	Open communication.
I felt like we worked as a team when using digital tools.	Social presence	Group cohesion.
I felt comfortable disagreeing with other classmates while maintaining a sense of trust.	Social presence	Open communication.
'Online discussions help me to develop a sense of collaboration'.	Social presence	Group cohesion.
Learning activities helped me ask new questions about the content.	Cognitive presence	Exploration.
I used a variety of information sources using different digital tools.	Cognitive presence	Exploration.
Combining new information helped me answer questions raised in communicative activities.	Cognitive presence	Integration.
I could apply the knowledge to complete my task in class or other non-class activities.	Cognitive presence	Resolution.
I felt motivated to explore content related questions.	Cognitive presence	Triggering event.
The instructions for the use of digital tools were clear.	Teaching presence	Design & Organization.

The sequences of the communicative activities employed digital tools, facilitated my learning improvement.	Teaching presence	Design & Organization.
“The instructor encouraged me to participate actively in online discussion on relevant issues in a way that helped me to learn”.	Teaching presence	Facilitation.
“The instructor provided feedback that helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses relative to the course’s goals and objectives”.	Teaching presence	Direct instruction.
“The instructor provided feedback in a timely fashion”.	Teaching presence	Direct instruction.

Table 18 shows the items to evaluate the three presences with their respective dimensions, such as those in social presences aligned to affective expressions, open communication, and group cohesion. Cognitive presence integrates exploration, integration, resolution and triggering events, whereas teaching presence involves design & organisation, facilitation, and direct instruction.

These dimensions allowed us to analyse the learners’ responses towards the feelings in peer-interaction during the learning process. Students could show how their trust in others and their interaction practices developed when working in teams and using digital tools or platforms.

EFL educators’ survey

It was remarkably important to analyse the EFL educators’ perceptions of the use of the blended learning approach versus traditional face-to-face interaction in higher education settings. This survey provided data to answer the main research question and the third specific one. Thus, this survey was conducted with experienced EFL educators who have developed English communicative language

skills in the university context. This survey was designed using Google Forms and shared through the educator's institutional email accounts.

The main points rated teachers' overall experience with this hybrid method against the traditional ones, highlighting both advantages and disadvantages or challenges. Moreover, educators' viewpoints about the influence factors when choosing their teaching methods were asked about. They also listed the most employed activities. At last, they indicated the digital tools that are most helpful and how they measure the learner's language learning process.

8. RESULTS

This section presents the results obtained from the data collected for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

8.1. Statistical analysis report

The quantitative data collected throughout the research development were organised in a manner that responded to the previously defined research questions. This first part corresponds to the statistical findings from the data, which help support the main purpose of the study and provide an answer to the study's problem. It also enables the interpretation of findings related to the application of BL in EFL classes.

8.1.1. Diagnostic test

8.1.1.1. Pre-test results

As an initial evaluative measure for both groups, experimental and control, a pre-test was administered to assess students' language proficiency levels before the application of the blended learning approach and the identification of learners' weaknesses. This proficiency was evident in their performance on reading and listening comprehension, as well as in grammar and vocabulary assessments.

Quantitative findings

Table 19 presents the overall results of the pre-test applied to the experimental and control group students. These results show the students' proficiency in English. The diagnostic test assessed the level of English proficiency among the participants in this research. This is the initial level from which students will start participating in the study to experience BL as a means to improve English language proficiency.

Table 19 Overall results of the Pre-test administered to the experimental and control groups.

Experimental group						Control group					
Sts	G & V	L	R	W	OP	Sts	G & V	L	R	W	OP
St 1	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56	1.45	St 1	0.28	0.31	0.34	0.36	1.25
St 2	0.42	0.46	0.50	0.53	1.3	St 2	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.45	1.4
St 3	0.38	0.41	0.44	0.48	1.5	St 3	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42	1.5
St 4	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56	1.1	St 4	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42	1.25
St 5	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49	1.3	St 5	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.28	1.00
St 6	0.36	0.40	0.43	0.46	1.4	St 6	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.39	1.15
St 7	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.48	1.3	St 7	0.39	0.43	0.47	0.50	1.45
St 8	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56	1.45	St 8	0.30	0.32	0.35	0.38	1.15
St 9	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.48	1.5	St 9	0.33	0.36	0.38	0.41	1.4
St 10	0.40	0.43	0.47	0.50	1.4	St 10	0.39	0.43	0.46	0.50	1.2
St 11	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49	1.2	St 11	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.39	1.35
St 12	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56	1.4	St 12	0.32	0.35	0.38	0.41	1.35
St 13	0.29	0.31	0.34	0.36	1.4	St 13	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.5
St 14	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42	1.4	St 14	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.39	1.15
St 15	0.34	0.37	0.40	0.43	1.25	St 15	0.34	0.37	0.40	0.43	1.2
St 16	0.40	0.43	0.47	0.50	1.4	St 16	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.45	1.4
St 17	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49	1.4	St 17	0.39	0.43	0.46	0.50	1.35
St 18	0.35	0.38	0.42	0.45	1.45	St 18	0.39	0.43	0.47	0.50	1.15
St 19	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49	1.3	St 19	0.28	0.31	0.34	0.36	1.4
St 20	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42	1.4	St 20	0.29	0.32	0.35	0.37	1.35
St 21	0.36	0.40	0.43	0.46	1.3	St 21	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.44	1.35
St 22	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.48	1.4	St 22	0.26	0.28	0.30	0.32	1.35
St 23	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49	1.4	St 23	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.45	1.4
St 24	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56	1.5	St 24	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.39	1.45
St 25	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49	1.45	St 25	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.47	1.1
St 26	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49	1.2	St 26	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.39	1.45
St 27	0.31	0.34	0.37	0.39	1.4	St 27	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.39	1.45
St 28	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.48	1.25	St 28	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.45	1.35
St 29	0.32	0.35	0.38	0.41	1.4	St 29	0.36	0.39	0.42	0.45	1.2
						St 30	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.39	1.4
						St 31	0.30	0.33	0.35	0.38	1.35
						St 32	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.39	1.35

Note. The pre-test was measured by a 3.5 score, and it was triggered in the oral exam over 1.5 and the written exam over 2 marks, which were divided into Grammar & Vocabulary G & V over 22%, Listening = L over 24%, Reading = R over 26%, and Writing = 28%.

From Table 19, it is observable that the results obtained in reading and writing skills

by the experimental group students in the pre-test were higher than those obtained by the control group. In the Grammar and Vocabulary section, both the experimental and control groups show a marked improvement in most learners. Within the experimental group, six students achieved the maximum value (0,44) in this section, whereas only two students in the control group obtained (0,39), being the best performance in this same section. Additionally, the experimental group outperformed the control group by a margin of 0.05 points, representing the highest percentage difference between the two groups. In contrast, the minimum score in this section, achieved by both groups, was attained by only one student. The experimental group received 0.29 points, while the control group received 0.22. It shows a difference of 0.07 points. One hundred per cent of the students failed the questions related to the use of the present perfect grammar. The majority of correct marks were focused on past events with the vocabulary related to journalism.

On the other hand, reading assessment results revealed satisfactory marks in both groups, who were able to understand short and simple stories. The maximum score within the experimental group was 0.52, while the minimum was 0.34 points. The control group's highest score was 0.47, and the lowest was 0.27 points. On the other hand, listening assessment results also showed positive marks between both groups. It means that students understood the most important information from a dialogue in which people were ordering food in a restaurant. The situation demanded an explanation of what they liked or disliked. In the experimental group, the highest score was 0.48, while the control group obtained 0.43 points. The minimum score for the experimental group was 0.31, and for the control group was 0.24

A more detailed analysis of the students' written assignments revealed several challenges. For example, while the experimental group students exhibited an excellent command of grammar and vocabulary, their written responses tended to be concise, with occasional punctuation errors and spelling mistakes. This result provides a clearer picture of the experimental group's language abilities, highlighting both their strengths and areas where they can improve. The highest performance among the experimental group was 0.56, while the lowest was 0.36. In contrast, the control group's maximum score was 0.50, and the minimum was

0.36.

In the speaking skill, the entire experimental group of students used expressions to provide concise and accurate responses. In contrast, a subtle hesitation was noted, which indicates a potential area for improvement in fluency and spontaneous verbal expression. These results offer valuable insights into the overall language proficiency of the experimental group students, highlighting their strengths and areas for improvement. Among the experimental group students, the highest score was 1.50 points, and the lowest was 1.10. Conversely, only one student of the control group got 1.50 points, which is the maximum value. Only one student got the lowest score (0.50).

Therefore, a planned action, like the one intended in this study, could enhance the experimental group students' written communication skills and promote greater fluency in spoken language. It ensures a more comprehensive and balanced language development for these two groups.

Once the results of the pre-test were presented for the experimental and control groups in this study, the results obtained from applying the observation checklist are as follows.

8.1.2. Observation checklist results

The observation checklist was administered to the students in the experimental group to analyse the factors that benefited language acquisition when the learners are faced with blended learning contexts. These results provided information to answer the first research question. It also contributed to analysing the strategies that facilitated the development of the learning process through the BL approach.

Based on the checklist results and the notes taken by the researcher, it was possible to observe that the main characteristic students used was active participation. This active participation took place during the classroom hours of English class and English hours devoted to out-of-class activities developed through the Moodle platform. The findings provided meaningful insights into learners' attitudes toward

performing activities that develop communicative skills in higher education, such as reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary.

Qualitative findings (quantitative support)

The following checklist data analysis addresses not only the qualities of the learners' behaviour in a blended learning approach, but it also provides a ranking of the students' participation in class and out-of-class activities in English as a Foreign Language. Therefore, it was divided into five sections, and each item was evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5. The first one was a classroom environment designed to examine the learners' insights about the physical setting and the integration of technological resources. The second one was teaching methodology to assess the educator's skills in dealing with technology and technological tools to facilitate the learning process. The third one was designed to examine teachers' rapport in instructional strategies, as well as students' engagement and interaction. The fourth one was administering feedback, and another one was taking notes about the learner's behaviour. These responses were directed to coping with communicative activities developed through blended learning tasks.

8.1.2.1. Checklist analysis

Table 20 presents a checklist of classroom facilities to determine the level of acceptability expressed by students.

Table 20 Checklist about classroom facilities to face blended learning environments.

<i>Classroom Environment:</i>	
<i>Physical Setting:</i>	
Neatness and organisation of the classroom.	4
Adequate seating arrangements for student engagement.	3
Availability and use of instructional materials.	4
<i>Technological Resources:</i>	
Presence and functionality of technology tools (e.g., SmartScreen, computers, etc.).	5
Effective integration of technology into the lesson.	4

These facilities are taken into account in relation to the application of BL in EFL

classes. Students showed acceptability in relation to the classroom environment. As can be seen from the table, they consider it a clean and very orderly space where students from the experimental group can interact using the available technological resources and materials. According to the researcher's observation notes, it was evident that students complained about the short distance between the seats. This distance prevented students from adjusting their seating arrangements to facilitate specific learning activities for communication.

Another aspect to consider was the integration of technology in the learning process. This technological incorporation was conducted appropriately in many communicative classroom activities. Nevertheless, the lack of a reliable internet connection, due to low speed or service disruptions, caused inconveniences for all students in completing their tasks simultaneously. Therefore, for this kind of unforeseen problem, a long-range router was provided, allowing students to benefit from a wider Wi-Fi signal through the institutional open wireless account. This was the way to reduce the limitations of internet access. Table 21 outlines the academic instructional settings designed to support blended learning environments.

Table 21 Checklist about academic instructional settings to face blended learning environments.

<i>Teaching Methodology:</i>	
<i>Introduction:</i>	
Clear articulation of lesson objectives.	4
Engaging introduction to capture students' attention.	4
<i>Instructional Strategies:</i>	
Variety in instructional methods (e.g., lecture, group work, discussions).	4
Application of pre-during-post reading/listening strategies.	5
<i>Student Engagement:</i>	
Active participation of students.	5
Monitoring and encouragement of student contributions.	5
Use of questioning techniques to stimulate critical thinking.	4
<i>Differentiation:</i>	
Adaptation of teaching methods to address diverse learning styles.	4
Provision for students requiring additional support.	4
<i>Technology Integration:</i>	
<i>Use of Digital Tools:</i>	
Integration of digital tools (e.g., Google Forms, GoConqr, Educaplay).	5
Effectiveness in utilising technology to enhance learning.	5
<i>Student Interaction with Technology:</i>	
Student engagement with technology tools.	5
Evidence of students utilising digital resources for learning.	5

It outlines the criteria for evaluating the blended learning academic setting. Students in the experimental group provided favourable qualifications, as shown in the table. The educational instruction for each lesson was articulated in conjunction with the learning objective, which was written on the board to inform students. During the lessons, students from the experimental group were guided to develop the activities through the blended learning approach.

The contexts in which the experimental group participated were those in which the combination of face-to-face and online instruction was organised and applied. Learners' engagement was achieved through the planned activities. The combination of learning strategies provided in the classes was one of the factors that contributed to the students' engagement and active participation during the application of the blended learning approach. Communicative activities, such as those in listening and reading skills, were conducted through comprehension strategies focusing on the pre-, during, and post-stages, which were performed using technological tools.

The integration of digital tools was observed, as it facilitated the learning process. For instance, the Mentimeter or Genially apps contributed to introducing the topic of the activity in advance, allowing for scanning. This activity aimed to identify the gist of a text, the main idea, or the audio from a lecture, broadcast, or dialogue. The post-stage questionnaires, created using Quizizz, Kahoot, WhatsApp, or Google Forms, aimed to assess the students' learning process with the blended learning approach. It was meaningful for learners to interact through technological resources, which support their learning process and enable students to adopt other learning styles. The experimental group was consistently willing to participate in various activities, and this willingness increased further when technology was incorporated, creating a cycle of activation and integration. Table 22 presents the ranking of learners' involvement in classroom activities within the blended learning framework.

Table 22 Ranking of learners' involvement in hours-class activities with blended learning.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND AUTONOMOUS WORK						
Students	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
	Reading & Speaking	Reading & Listening	Listening & Writing	Listening & Speaking	Reading & writing	Speaking & Writing
St1	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
St2	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.25
St3	0.22	0.23	0.15	0.24	0.25	0.25
St4	0.12	0.21	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25
St5	0.12	0.17	0.24	0.25	0.25	0.23
St6	0.22	0.23	0.15	0.24	0.15	0.25
St7	0.22	0.24	0.15	0.25	0.25	0.25
St8	0.22	0.10	0.20	0.25	0.25	0.25
St9	0.22	0.23	0.20	0.24	0.25	0.25
St10	0.11	0.23	0.21	0.25	0.24	0.25
St11	0.15	0.17	0.24	0.15	0.20	0.20
St12	0.22	0.22	0.15	0.25	0.25	0.25
St13	0.21	0.10	0.24	0.15	0.25	0.25
St14	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.25
St15	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.24	0.25	0.24
St16	0.21	0.10	0.15	0.15	0.25	0.25
St17	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.24	0.25	0.25
St18	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.25
St19	0.20	0.10	0.22	0.24	0.25	0.15
St20	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.25	0.25	0.25
St21	0.21	0.10	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.15
St22	0.25	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.25
St23	0.25	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.20
St24	0.25	0.22	0.15	0.25	0.20	0.25
St25	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.20	0.25
St26	0.22	0.23	0.21	0.25	0.25	0.25
St27	0.22	0.22	0.15	0.25	0.25	0.25
St28	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.25	0.15	0.25
St29	0.15	0.24	0.23	0.25	0.15	0.25

As shown in Table 22, learners' performance increased each week by integrating the blended learning approach. It is essential to remember that for university students, technological tools are an integral part of their daily lives, so they feel motivated when using them. Students of journalism will be required to use these tools even in their future professional jobs. Therefore, activities that promote the use of technological tools were their main motivation during the classes. It is also important to consider that one skill that favoured the use of technology in synchronous and asynchronous activities was writing. There was an emphasis on writing, taking into account that, according to the pre-test results, learners struggled with this skill more than with the other three. To reinforce writing, students needed

to acquire vocabulary and grammar, which they achieved through a combination of reading and speaking activities during the study. Listening activities were also planned and developed as a composite for EFL communication.

Among the components of FLL, motivation plays a very important role. It is one of the key issues to foster a positive class rapport. During the EFL interaction of the experimental group, it was observed that motivation played a significant role in the learners' interactions. Although motivation is difficult to measure, it was possible to observe when students participated in communication. These signs of motivation were identified thanks to the observation checklist. Learners engaged with ease in collaborative work in pairs or groups, thanks to the empathetic environment, to develop the assignments. Furthermore, it was evident that learners coped with learning applications in pairs and through group work to complete their assignments. Seeing their progressive participation and how learners felt confident being immersed in a hybrid class was encouraging.

8.1.2.2. Findings from the weekly blended learning application stage.

The findings from the application of the treatment to the experimental group are presented in figures. This section presents the graphical representation of the results obtained in the application of the BL approach with the experimental group. Figure 17 illustrates the percentage of learners' engagement in reading and speaking activities within blended learning contexts.

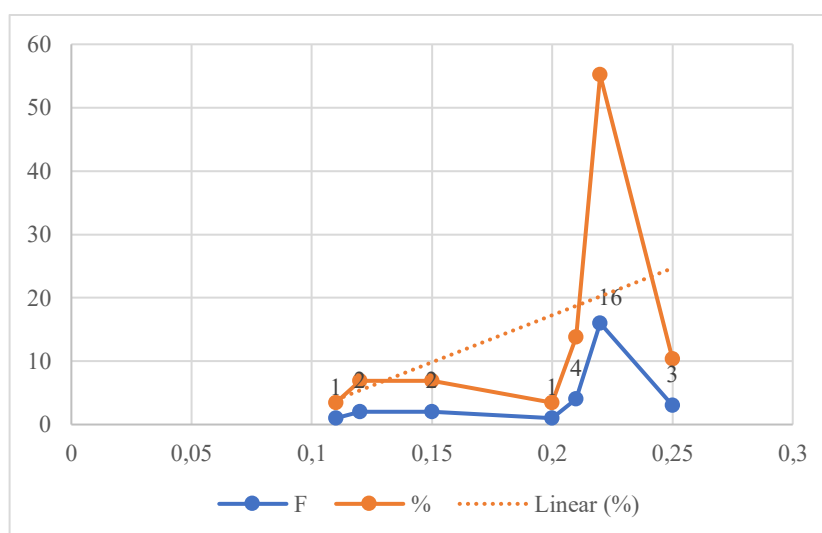


Figure 17 Week 1 the experimental group students' participation applying the blended learning approach in reading and speaking tasks.

To provide examples, the participation of students in reading and speaking activities began with the description of Figure 17, drawn from the experience during the first week. In week 1, most learners achieved a score of 0.22 out of 0.25 in completing reading and speaking activities. They achieved the highest percentage of 55.17%, as is illustrated in figure 16, followed by 13.79% out of the ones who got 0.21, while 10.34% learners got 0.25; stage scores 0.12 and 0.15 show the 6.90% and with 0.11 marks, 3.45% of students' participation

Learners were directed to reading comprehension tasks to increase their lexicon and adopt critical thinking viewpoints about the gist of the text. It allows learners to outline their main ideas and express them in class. During that week, Mentimeter, Quizizz, WhatsApp, and Google Forms were the primary learning apps used to develop activities during class hours and for self-directed work.

Figure 18 presents the results of the experience during the second week of application

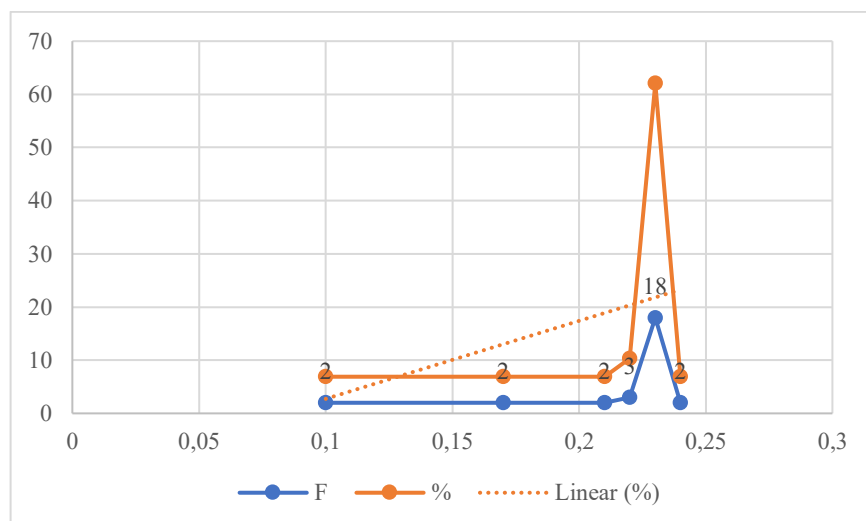


Figure 18 Week 2 experimental group students' participation applying the blended learning approach in reading and listening tasks.

In week 2, a combination of reading and listening activities was administered.

However, learners demonstrated fewer difficulties because they had practised the new words and were able to understand them when listening to the audio. That week, the learning apps included Wordwall, Educaplay, Google Forms, and Quizizz.

Regarding Figure 18, it is observed that 62.07% of learners reached a score of 0.23 points out of the total scores. This means that 10.34% of them received 0.22 points out of the total score. Furthermore, 6.90% of learners received 0.10, 0.17, 0.20, 0.21, and 0.24 points from the total scores, which highlights a balance in language learning proficiency. It was also seen an increase of 6.90% between weeks 1 and 2. These results are favourable for this study because the learners were aware of the English language learning context, as shown in Figure 19.

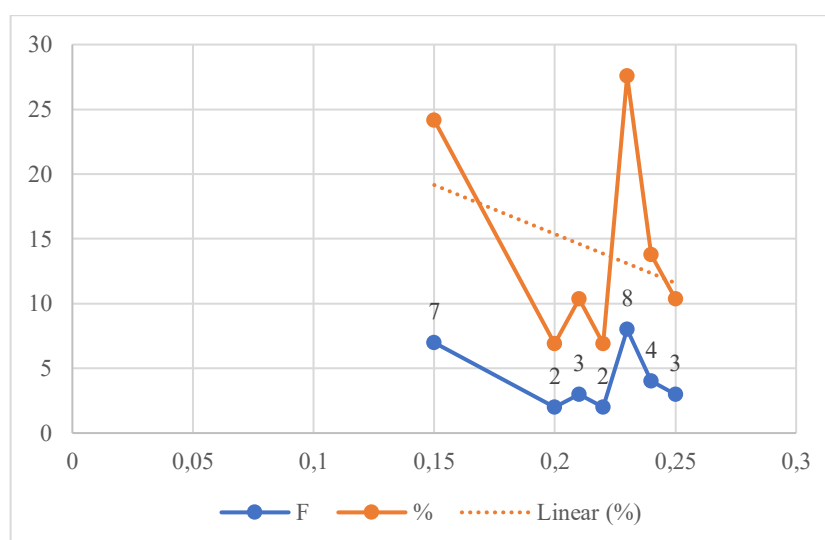


Figure 19 Week 3 the experimental group students' participation applying the blended learning approach in writing and listening tasks.

Regarding Week 3, learners completed a combination of simple writing and listening assignments via Google Forms, Moodle, and WhatsApp. The students were able to develop the tasks despite a few challenges; however, they were ultimately satisfied with their performance. In contrast, when they faced complex writing compositions, they complained due to the lack of previous knowledge about how to plan the structure of a composition.

Explanations were provided about the guidelines in Moodle, and a podcast was made available to review them before the writing activity in class. Given this, in figure 19, 10.34% of learners reached 0.25 and 0.21 points from the total scores, belonging to a small population group, versus 24.14% with 0.15 points from the total scores. On the other hand, 13.79% of learners reached 0.24, while 27.50% achieved 0.23 points out of the total score. Ultimately, 6.90% of learners achieved scores of 0.20 and 0.22.

For instance, Table 23 presents a sample of a writing composition from the experimental group in which students narrated a story, ordering and adding sequences in a chronological manner.

Table 23 Analysis of a writing composition communicative activity.

Writing composition	Criteria	Observation
<i>It was nine o'clock when She had breakfast because Her family left for work. She took the bin liner outside when She went back to her flat and the front door was closed, The wind blew her front door shut, immediatly She went to call her husband but Her husband went on a business trip. then she rang her neighbour's doorbell but Her neighbours also left for work.</i>	The writing is built around a purpose.	The text showed clear ideas of the main topic. Despite the narrative being basic, it didn't have a strong body and a poor ending.
	The writing makes sense.	Although the general idea was coherent, it presented grammatical errors, punctuation mark problems, which made some ideas unclear and also showed incomplete words.
	All part of the text belongs.	All ideas are supported by the main ideas.
	The writing is well-organised.	The narrative showed basic ideas with a lack of connectors, and some ideas were wrongly connected.
	Use correct punctuation and	It presented incorrect use of

capitalisation.	commas, capital letters and dots instead of commas,
Spelling.	It showed only a spelling without any impact on the comprehension of the text.

It was possible to find a decreased percentage of learners who achieved higher scores compared to week two, owing to the fact that a minor group of learners raised their scores to levels higher than what they achieved in week two. Nevertheless, it is essential to highlight that they refer to writing skills as a demanding ability to master. Figure 20 shows the learners' satisfaction level in listening and speaking activities within the blended learning experience.

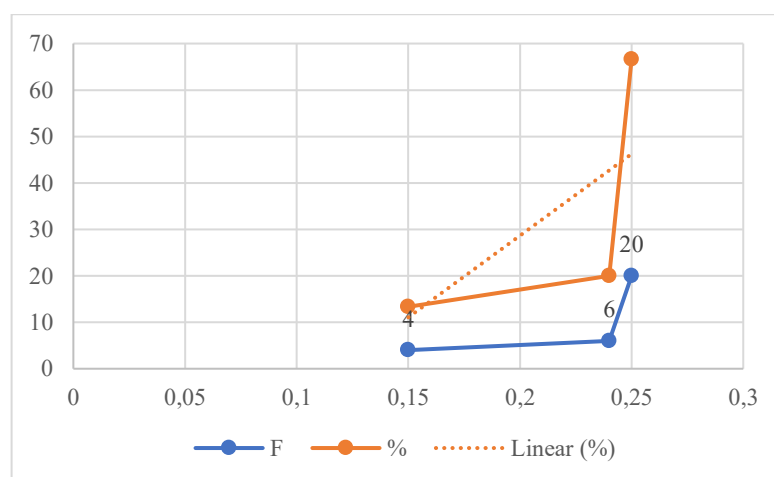


Figure 20 Week 4 the experimental group students applying the blended learning approach in listening and speaking tasks.

In week 4, learners effectively learn how to work with gaming apps in listening and speaking tasks. These apps were Quizizz and Wordwall, which students worked with in class. These technological tools encouraged them to participate in the tasks despite their interactions being assessed. GoConqr, Educaplay, and Moodle platforms were also useful digital tools that encouraged learners to engage in autonomous learning.

Thus, the data in Figure 20 reveal a total of 66.67%, which represents the majority of learners who achieved the total grade. Then, 20% of students scored 0.24, and

13.33% scored 0.15 points in the total score. In relation to this score, it is argued that a collateral benefit is present in the study, favouring the integration of technology in EFL learning processes and the type of skills learners felt confident with.

Figure 21 shows the learners' engagement in reading and writing tasks within blended learning environments during week 5.

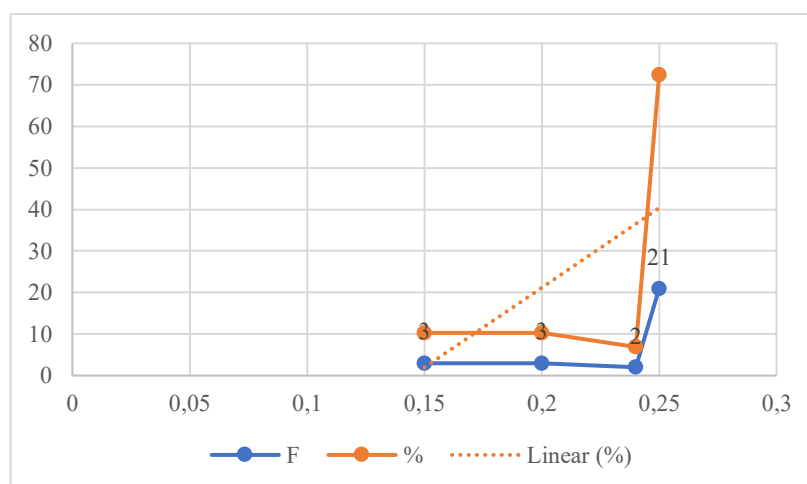


Figure 21 Week 5 the experimental group students applying the blended learning approach in reading and writing tasks.

Comparably, learners also demonstrated high interaction in reading and writing activities via Kahoot, GoConqr, Google Forms, and WhatsApp. This result emphasises that they enjoyed working on these technological tools, especially Kahoot, because it is dynamic. Although accessing the apps was somewhat difficult, students appreciated the use of Kahoot.

The results in Figure 21 illustrate a higher percentage of learners who reached 0.25 points from the total score, representing 72.41%. This is followed by 10.34% of students receiving 0.15 and 0.20 points, and 6.90% of students achieving 0.20 points in their scores. This data analysis revealed a progressive increase in the difference of 5.74% between weeks 4 and 5. In contrast, 10.34% was observed in the learners' scores in week 2 and 17.24% in week 1, indicating that learners felt comfortable and demonstrated self-confidence in using the blended learning approach.

Figure 22 presents the results of learners' interactions in speaking and writing activities developed in blended learning contexts during Week 6.

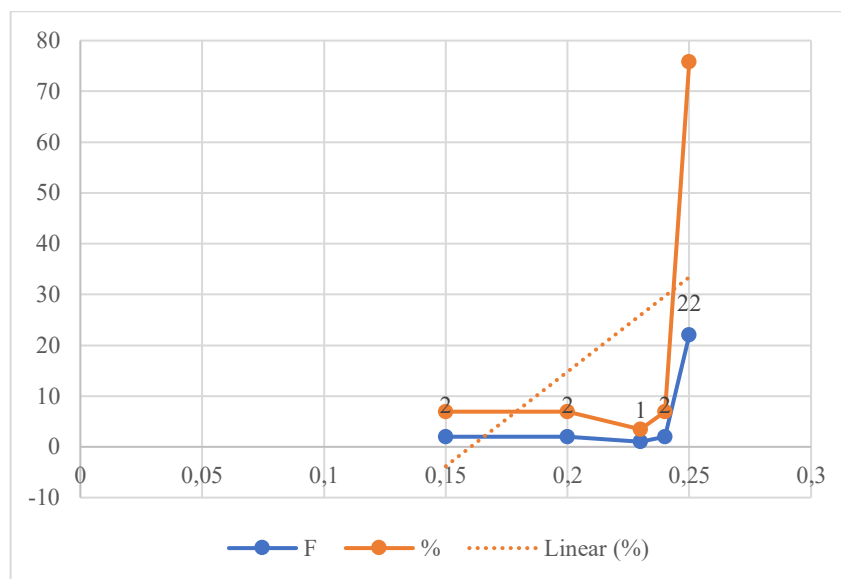


Figure 22 Week 6 the experimental group students applying the blended learning approach in speaking and writing.

In week 6, learners demonstrated greater strengths in developing writing tasks, fostering an attitude of determination and relief as they overcame the barriers they had experienced in writing compositions. Furthermore, during speaking exercises in communicative tasks, learners felt more confident in their viewpoints and encouraged their classmates to speak loudly in order to receive rewards or a bonus in their final grade.

Broadly speaking, the learners maintained their energy and were willing to participate in several activities using WordWall, Quizizz, WhatsApp, and Google Forms. Therefore, the data from Figure 22 illustrates that 75.86% of learners received 0.25 points from the general score, which was the maximum grade achieved in the speaking and writing tasks. Below it, 0.15, 0.20 and 0.24 points from the scores represented 6.90% in figure 21, while 0.23 points from the total score show 3.45%, revealing satisfactory outcomes.

Figure 23 illustrates the students' progress in language learning within blended learning contexts over the first 6 weeks.

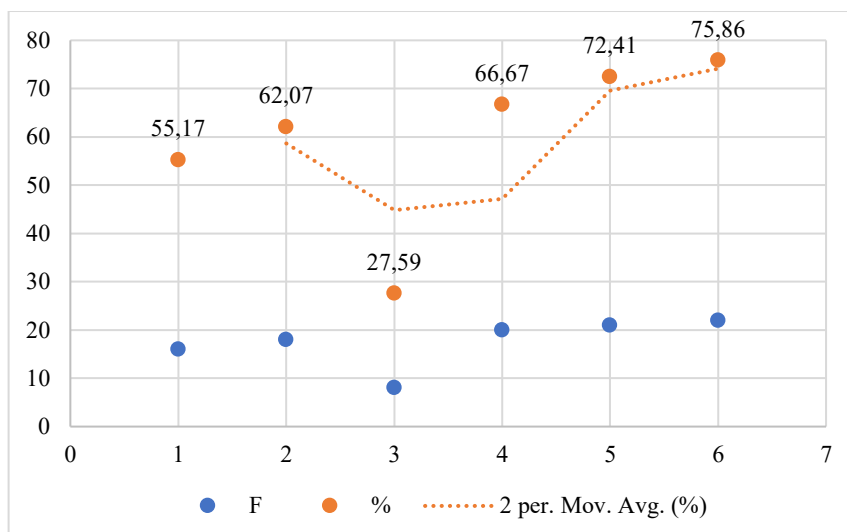


Figure 23 Ranking of the experimental group's active participation in reading, speaking, listening and writing tasks with the blended learning approach.

The outcomes of learner involvement during these six weeks evidenced a progressive shift in each activity and communicative skills during their learning process. The results show that a considerable percentage of learners' scores were different during the 6 weeks. It was also observed that the number of learners receiving low scores was increasing each week, which improved their grades.

In week 3, a small group of students got 0.23 points from the total score, and compared to their performances in week 2, it is possible to observe some improvement. In week 3, some other students scored 0.24 and 0.25 points. These scores represent a 27.59% increase, showing a 24.14% rise between the two weeks. Based on this analysis, a 5% additional growth was observed each week. Therefore, it is possible to register more productivity in students' work.

Other internet tools, such as quizzes from the Moodle platform, were used as part of the formative assessment to compare the results with the findings of synchronous and asynchronous tasks that had been analysed beforehand. The scores obtained by students during the application of the blended learning approach in the formative assessment are presented in Figure 24.

Formative Assessment in the Experimental Group

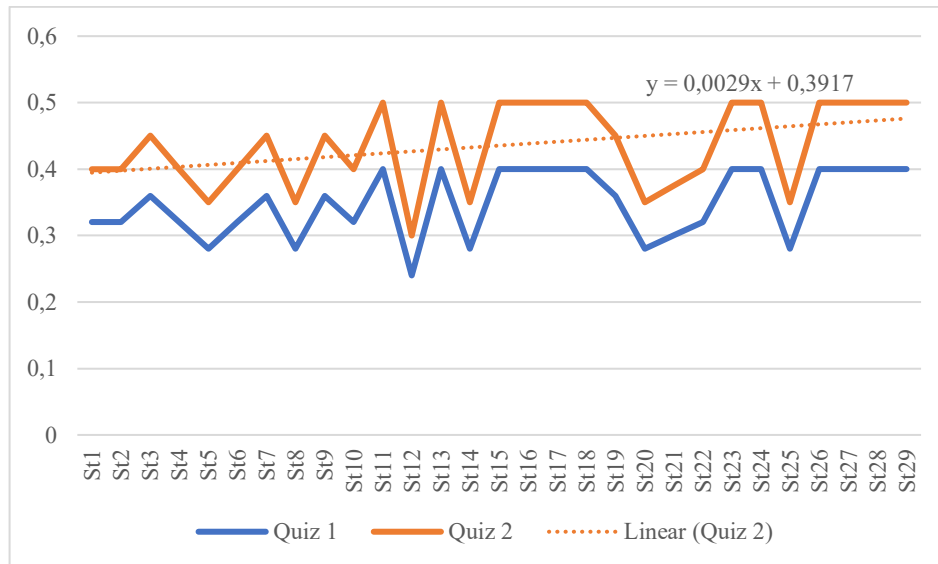


Figure 24 Report of the experimental group quizzes grades as formative assessment.

Figure 24 presents the increase in learners' scores from the quizzes administered in weeks 2 and 5, measuring students' language learning participation in communication and written tasks. This differentiation also provides information on the work students developed when faced with a blended learning approach. It is possible to argue that the difference in students' learning and participation in tasks increased when faced with blended learning activities. The increase between Quiz 1 and Quiz 2 was noteworthy. The variation between the scores in both quizzes is significant. The experimental group showed improvement in performance across several learning activities during the six-week treatment period.

Table 24 compares the results of Quiz 1 and Quiz 2 as part of the formative assessment process.

Table 24 Comparative chart of quiz-1 and quiz-2 results as part of formative assessment.

Quiz 1			Quiz 2		
Criteria	F	%	Criteria	F	%
0,24	3	10,34	0,3	1	3,45
0,28	4	13,79	0,35	5	17,24
0,3	5	17,24	0,38	1	3,45
0,32	4	13,79	0,4	6	20,69
0,36	6	20,69	0,45	4	13,79
0,4	7	24,14	0,5	12	41,38
Total	29	100	Total	29	100

As shown in Table 24, Quiz 1 criteria received a base of 0.24 points from the total score, accounting for almost 50% of the total grade. In contrast, the top score was 0.40 points, representing 24.14% of learners' grades. On the other hand, in Quiz-2 results, learners improved their scores, which was fundamental in indicating that the minimal score in these results was 0.30, meaning there was a 2-point increase. Additionally, the highest score, with the most representative number of points, was the maximum grade of 0.50, which represents 41.38% of learners who achieved this grade. There is a score below it, 0.40 points in the grade, which was achieved by 20.69% of learners. The media found that the score was 0.35 points from the total score, which represented a total of 17.24% of students who obtained the same score.

8.1.2.3. Group Comparison; Experimental and Control

It is relevant in this part of the paper to observe and establish the difference between the experimental group and the students in the control group. The students in the control group were involved in traditional teaching and learning activities. For the students in the control group, the activities were designed to be developed during class hours, reinforcing the content with autonomous work attached to the Moodle platform. It is also necessary to mention that the control group was drawn to the essential use of technology, which showed little learner participation due to the traditional activities related to filling out exercises and taking notes, which were time-consuming.

The Control group students also needed help with writing and listening tasks. This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, there is a lack of encouraging writing practices for forming a paragraph. On the other hand, the lack of self-trust prevented them from completing the listening activity successfully due to their limited comprehension of the audio. Despite these challenges, during week 3, they experienced changes in their learning performances in class and their confidence in these two skills slightly improved.

Furthermore, although the control group learners were initially reluctant to complete reading tasks due to their limited lexicon background and the complexity

of the writing process, which involved numerous words in each unit, they became increasingly involved, and their interactions in class increased. These students needed to be immersed in a continuously encouraging environment. Similarly, at the beginning, they felt hesitant to share their viewpoints, often giving one-word answers; however, they gained confidence, and their responses became more detailed.

Regarding the computer lab experience, both groups of learners, experimental and control, were enthusiastic, especially the students in the control group, because it was new for them. On the one hand, the experimental group students were able to cope promptly with the set of activities provided on the platforms and scored satisfactory grades. On the other hand, the control group learners completed fewer activities than the students from the experimental group, simultaneously, because they were not used to working with this kind of task on the computer, perhaps on paper.

8.1.3. Post-test results

As part of the data analysis from the observation checklist, the results of the post-test contributed to the analysis of the effectiveness of employing blended learning strategies with the integration of digital tools for learning the English language.

Quantitative findings

The exam accounts for 35% of the final grade in the course and is divided into two assessment tests, with the following percentages: 15% assigned to the oral exam and 20% to the written exam. These exams included the evaluation of grammar & vocabulary, listening & reading and composition. Table 25 shows a comparative result obtained from the post-test administered to the experimental and control groups. The written exam was structured into four sections to evaluate learners' communicative learning skills based on the content studied during the six-week period. The sections were: grammar and vocabulary, assigned 0.40 points; reading, 0.60 points; listening, 0.60 points; and written composition, 0.40 points. The speaking section of the exam was assessed by assigning 1.50 points.

Table 25 Comparative report of the final grade results between the experimental group and control group post-test.

Criteria	Experimental group	Control group	Difference
	scores	scores	scores
<i>Written exam</i>			
Grammar & vocabulary	0.38	0.32	0.06
Reading	0.45	0.38	0.07
Listening	0.41	0.35	0.06
Writing	0.48	0.40	0.08
<i>Speaking exam</i>			
Oral production	1.37	1.20	0.17

According to Table 25, the experimental group demonstrated strengths in each language skill compared to the control group. A growth rate was observed in speaking production and written compositions, without adding to the number of grammar & vocabulary items. These findings revealed essential information about the effectiveness of the blended learning approach in promoting English language acquisition. This aspect responds to the general research question of this study.

8.1.3.1. Written exam results

Table 26, below, presents the responses from the experimental and control groups in the grammar and vocabulary sections.

Table 26 Comparative report about grammar and vocabulary findings between the experimental and control groups.

Questions	Grammar /vocabulary	CEFR LEVEL	Experimental group	Control group
Ted isn't here. He's _____ to the mall.	Present perfect	A2-B1	27 correct replies.	21 correct replies.
			2 incorrect replies.	11 incorrect replies.

After they ___ to the radio station, I ___ on the script.	Past simple and past perfect.	B1	18 correct replies. 11 incorrect replies.	14 correct replies. 18 incorrect replies.
My boss ___ to create a new program next season.	Future tenses: will; be going to; present continuous.	B1	27 correct replies 2 incorrect replies	25 correct replies. 7 incorrect replies.
Our community manager ___ her social networks 15 times a day. Now, she checks them every 5 minutes.	Past simple; past continuous; used to.	B1	23 correct replies 6 incorrect replies	12 correct replies. 20 incorrect replies.
Tom ___ with John tonight. They have planned it for days.	Future tenses: will; might. / Use of 'definitely'.	B1	27 correct replies 2 incorrect replies	19 correct replies. 13 incorrect replies.
___ I finish work, I will go home today.	As soon as; before; until.	A2-B1	28 correct replies 1 incorrect reply	16 correct replies. 16 incorrect replies.

Table 26 demonstrated that the students in the experimental group improved their grammar proficiency level, as most learners answered correctly based on the CEFR level corresponding to the pre-intermediate English Language level. Whereas the majority of control group students struggled with some aspects of grammar structure, specifically those related to the past and perfect simple tenses.

Table 27 presents the comparative results of reading performance between the experimental and control groups.

Table 27 Comparative report about reading findings between the experimental and control groups.

Questions	Reading	CEFR LEVEL	Experimental group	Control group
Linda crashed her car because she got a flat tire.	True False Correct the false one.	B1	25 correct replies. 2 incorrect replies.	22 correct replies. 10 incorrect replies.
She arrived home because she couldn't start the engine.	True False Correct the false one.	B1	24 correct replies. 5 incorrect replies.	25 correct replies. 7 incorrect replies.
She got to her friend's house on foot.	True False Correct the false one.	B1	27 correct replies. 2 incorrect replies.	23 correct replies. 9 incorrect replies.
She had to change the tire for more than an hour.	False False Correct the false one.	B1	26 correct replies. 3 incorrect replies.	17 correct replies. 15 incorrect replies.

Table 27 highlights that the experimental group demonstrated greater strengths in this receptive competence, as they were able to identify the main and specific ideas of the text more effectively compared to the control group. In addition, most of the experimental group students could recognise incorrect sentences and then accurately rewrite them, demonstrating their skills in text content related to grammar and vocabulary. In contrast, Table 28 shows the comparative results of listening performance for both groups.

Table 28 Comparative report about listening findings between the experimental and control groups.

Questions	Listening	CEFR LEVEL	Experimental group	Control group
What happened to Ray?	Multiple choice options.	A2-B1	20 correct replies. 7 incorrect replies.	22 correct replies. 10 incorrect replies.

When did Victor graduate?	Multiple choice options.	A2-B1	25 correct replies. 2 incorrect replies.	21 correct replies. 13 incorrect replies.
What did Sandra do after lunch?	Multiple choice options.	A2-B1	23 correct replies. 4 incorrect replies.	26 correct replies. 6 incorrect replies.

Table 28 provides evidence that the students from the experimental group got more correct answers. It was proof that they have more command of this language skill than the students in the control group. This result could provide students with the opportunity to engage with digital listening platforms. Since students feel motivated to practice listening, it can be said that technology appeals to them for listening tasks. Nonetheless, both groups, experimental and control, showed a growth in their cognitive level regarding this receptive language skill.

Written composition results

This productive skill was one of the weaknesses identified in both the experimental and control groups in the application of the pre-test. The post-test results addressed new information in the development of the tasks in this skill. Table 29 reports the written composition results from the post-test administered to the experimental group.

Table 29 Report of the written composition from the post-test administered to the experimental group.

Aspects	Criteria	Observation
The writing is built around a purpose.	Great	The narrative of the text presented informative ideas and an adequate structure, aligning with the task's aim.
The writing makes sense.	Great	The text was coherent with logical ideas and well-structured due to its

		adequate use of past simple, past perfect, and past continuous grammar structures, as well as the future tense. It introduces a satisfactory lexical domain.
All part of the text belongs.	Great	The ideas are clearly connected and appropriate to the main aim, as a variety of connectors and sequencers are used.
The writing is well-organised.	Great	The text demonstrates a clear comprehension of language in a chronological manner.
Use correct punctuation and capitalisation.	Great	No punctuation and capitalisation grammar errors in the text.
Spelling.	Great	No spelling errors in the text.

Table 29 demonstrated the improvement of the experimental group in this productive skill. This narrative sample was tested at the B1 level in the CEFR according to the provided description scale. The main standard is related to the fact that it states the correct use of punctuation marks, without spelling errors, and without incomplete ideas. The narratives needed to be coherent and well-structured to connect to the main idea of a story. The students in the experimental group demonstrated knowledge of the past tense structure, using appropriate lexicon and connectors.

Table 30 reports the written composition results from the post-test administered to the control group.

Table 30 Report of written composition from the post-test administered to the control group.

Aspects	Criteria	Observation
The writing is built around a purpose.	Great	The text shows a clear main idea.
The writing makes sense.	Good	The narrative was almost understandable because it presented concise ideas and grammatical errors, which made it confusing. It presents basic lexicon.
All part of the text belongs.	Great	All ideas were related to the story.
The writing is well-organised.	Good	The text was ordered without a variety of connectors.
Use correct punctuation.	Good	A few problems with punctuation marks.
Use correct capitalisation.	Fair	Some capital letter errors.
Spelling.	Fair	Some spelling errors.

Regarding the analysis presented in Table 30, the written composition example from one of the learners in the control group demonstrated a transition from A2 to B1 CEFR levels. The text presented a simple narrative of daily past events with basic connectors and vocabulary. Nevertheless, the text contains punctuation marks, capital letters, and spelling errors that result in a lack of coherence in some ideas. This fact provided the researcher with information about the experience of needy students in relation to written practice, aiming to develop their grammatical knowledge of the English tense system, as well as their lexicon and punctuation skills.

8.1.3.1.1. Analysis of the written test scores

The following analysis introduces the mechanism used to assess both the experimental and control groups at the group level in the production of grammar and vocabulary related to reading, listening, and writing. Table 31 presents the experimental group's post-test results, which serve as a summative assessment.

Table 31 Report of the experimental group post-test results as a summative assessment.

Student	Written exam – experimental group results			
	Grammar & Vocabulary	Listening	Reading	Writing
St 1	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56
St 2	0.42	0.46	0.49	0.53
St 3	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.48
St 4	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56
St 5	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49
St 6	0.36	0.40	0.43	0.46
St 7	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.48
St 8	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56
St 9	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.48
St 10	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56
St 11	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49
St 12	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56
St 13	0.29	0.31	0.34	0.36
St 14	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42
St 15	0.34	0.37	0.40	0.43
St 16	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56
St 17	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49
St 18	0.35	0.38	0.42	0.45
St 19	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49
St 20	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42
St 21	0.36	0.40	0.43	0.46
St 22	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.48
St 23	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49
St 24	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.56
St 25	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49
St 26	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49

The results presented in Table 31 highlight encouraging outcomes that may support the applicability of blended learning in EFL Language environments. In contrast, Table 32 presents the post-test results of the control group, used as a summative assessment.

Table 32 Report of the control group post-test results as a summative assessment.

Student	Written exam – control group results			
	Grammar & Vocabulary	Listening	Reading	Writing
St 1	0.28	0.31	0.34	0.36
St 2	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.45
St 3	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42
St 4	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42
St 5	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.28
St 6	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.39
St 7	0.39	0.43	0.47	0.50
St 8	0.30	0.32	0.35	0.38
St 9	0.33	0.36	0.38	0.41
St 10	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.50
St 11	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.39
St 12	0.32	0.35	0.38	0.41
St 13	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.39
St 14	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.39
St 15	0.34	0.37	0.40	0.43
St 16	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.45
St 17	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.50
St 18	0.39	0.43	0.47	0.50
St 19	0.28	0.31	0.34	0.36
St 20	0.29	0.32	0.35	0.37
St 21	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.44
St 22	0.26	0.28	0.30	0.32
St 23	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.45
St 24	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.39
St 25	0.37	0.41	0.44	0.47
St 26	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.39
St 27	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.39
St 28	0.35	0.38	0.41	0.45
St 29	0.36	0.39	0.42	0.45
St 30	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.39
St 31	0.30	0.33	0.35	0.38
St 32	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.39

Table 32 shows the results obtained by the students from the control group when they took the pre-test. This table provides information on the results obtained by

each student who participated in this group. The skills were the same as those in which the experimental group was tested. On the other hand, Table 33 displays the experimental group's post-test results on the written test.

Table 33 Report of the experimental group post-test results on the written test.

Criteria	F	%
100% (2 scores)	7	24.14
80% - 95% (1.90–1.60 scores)	16	55.17
79% - 65% (1.3-1.55 scores)	6	20.69
Total	29	100

Given the results, most students in the experimental group showed high satisfaction with their language proficiency, with a range of 80% to 95% in their final assessment report (55.17%). Moreover, a high number of students achieved good results in this test. It means that 24.14% of students reached the perfect score, which supports the claim of favourable findings in the experimental group. These findings are particularly related to reading and listening, followed by writing, grammar, and vocabulary, which complement the communication skills. For instance, Figure 25 illustrates the experimental group's participation level in reading, listening, and writing skills, as well as its complement to grammar and vocabulary.

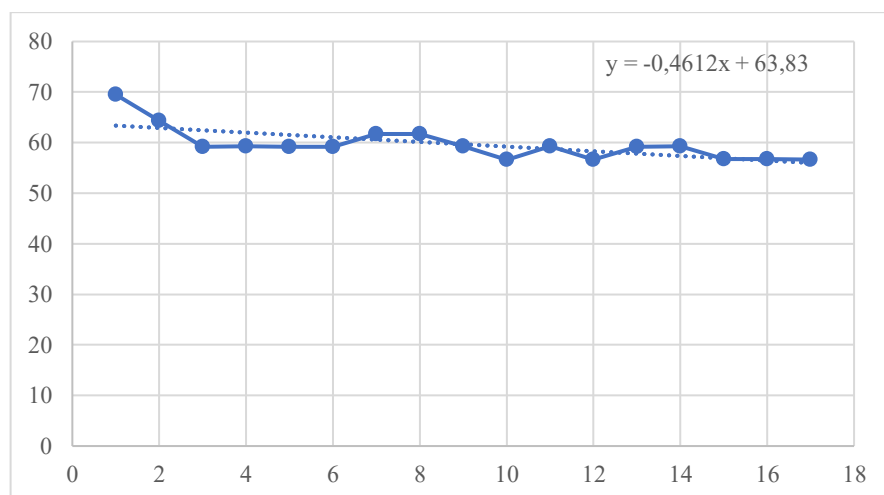


Figure 25 Ranking of the experimental group participation in reading, listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary.

Figure 25 shows several levers that locate the assessment of reading and listening

skills at a high percentage of 30.60% as skills in EFL, and writing at a difference of 1.4% in second place. Meanwhile, grammar and vocabulary fall at 27.07%. All of these communication skills were encouraged and developed through the integration of the blended learning method and the EFL learning apps used.

In contrast, for instance, the data in Table 34 revealed that half of the control group scored within a range of 1 to 1.4 on their written test, which included grammar and vocabulary, reading, listening, and writing.

Table 34 Report of the control group post-test results on the written test.

Written test		
Criteria	F	%
1 – 1.4	16	50
1.41 – 1.6	10	31.25
1.61 - 1.8	6	18.75
Total	32	100

In Table 34, the control group shows improvements from 1.4 to 1.6 and from 1.6 to 1.8. These results provide information on a 50% of cases. Both increase in the points obtained by students address favourable indicators in spite of the fact that they were immersed only in the traditional learning methods.

8.1.3.2. Speaking exam results: Experimental and Control group

Regarding oral production, both groups, the experimental and control groups, were assessed through various aspects, including content & vocabulary, language, pronunciation, fluency, and communicative ability, in order to explore the language learning process of the students. Table 35 provides an overview of the oral production results obtained in the post-test.

Table 35 Report of oral production results from the post-test.

Aspects	Experimental group observation	Control group observation
Content and Vocabulary	The learner introduced varied expressions at a language level to narrate events, but some words were overused.	The learner demonstrated a basic word language level, but produced an understandable narrative.
Language	The learner presented accurate use of past tense grammar.	The learner presented a few errors in past verb tenses with some incorrect word order.
Pronunciation	The learner talked clearly and was understandable.	The learner mispronounced some past verb forms.
Fluency and Communicative Ability	The learners showed some pauses between ideas, but they connected with the topic.	The learner introduced slow pauses between ideas, indicating limitations in connecting them.

It reveals that both the experimental and control groups demonstrated an enhancement in this productive skill, which they had struggled with continuously. The written sample of the experimental group demonstrated satisfactory production in communicating past experiences, expressed in relation to their pasts, and also through the use of a varied lexicon.

This analysis focused on descriptions aligned to the B1 CEFR level; however, the learners in this experimental group need to work more on these elements to achieve accuracy, which is essential for B1 level students. Considering the descriptions provided for the control group, oral production places students within a range of A2 to B1 CEFR levels. It is due to the fact that the learner's ideas were understandable with a few verb pronunciation errors and a limited vocabulary.

Table 36 summarises the experimental group's post-test results on the speaking test.

Table 36 Report of the experimental group post-test results on the speaking test.

Criteria	F	%
1.1	1	3.45
1.2	2	6.90
1.25	2	6.90
1.3	5	17.24
1.4	12	41.38
1.45	4	13.79
1.5	3	10.34
Total	29	100

In the speaking exam, most of the experimental group students also demonstrated positive outcomes in their oral communication skills, reaching 65.52% in scores within a range from 1.40 to 1.50 points, while 31.03% represented a few learners who scored from 1.2 to 1.3 points, and last, only 3.45% of them got 1.0 as a score. These findings regarding the learners' speaking skills highlight the need for students to enhance their oral skills and for teachers to provide meaningful practice in communication tasks within the classroom.

Table 37 presents the post-test results of the control group on the speaking test.

Table 37 Report of the control group post-test results on the speaking test.

Speaking test		
Criteria	F	%
0.50 - 1.2	17	53.13
1.21 - 1.4	12	37.5
1.41 - 1.5	3	9.38
Total	32	100

Similarly, the findings presented in Table 37 demonstrate the positive aspects of learning English using the traditional method. Despite the high growth in the control group scores, there was a range from 0.50 to 1.2 in the spoken test. It was also possible to observe a notable percentage of learners who increased their scores from 1.21 points to 1.4 and from 1.41 to 1.5 points, resulting in an average score of 1.20 across the whole group.

Conversely, the control group's writing and speaking test results demonstrated the students' English Language learning proficiency, yielding acceptable outcomes, as

shown in Figure 26.

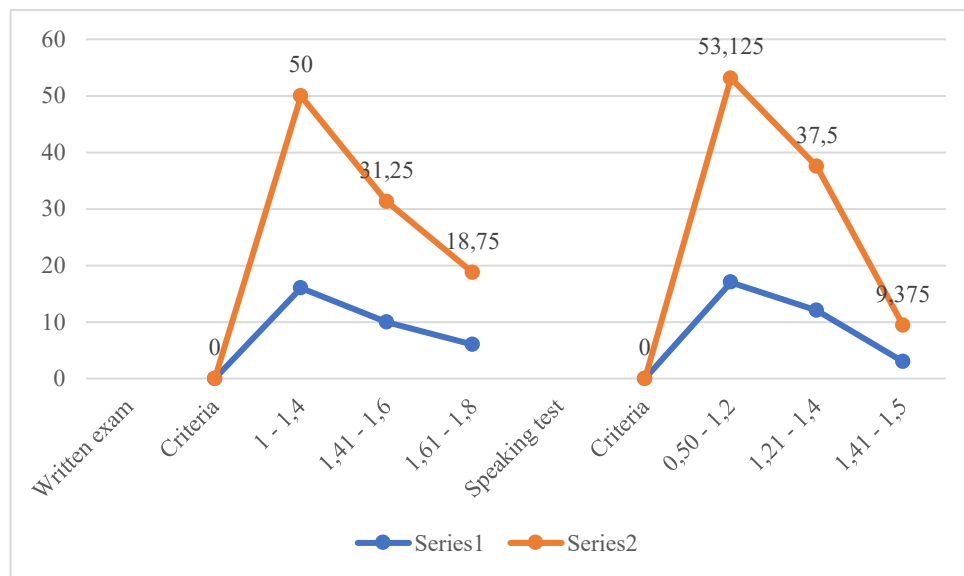


Figure 26 Ranking of control group post-test results.

These findings highlight a greater strength in writing than in oral communication skills, which are reflected in reading and listening, as well as grammar, vocabulary, and composition.

8.1.4. EFL educator's insights

Regarding the findings of the survey conducted on 15 EFL educators, this data analysis provided meaningful feedback on the first and second research questions of this study, offering inputs that contribute to a deeper understanding of the benefits of the blended learning approach and the strategies that facilitate the learning process in learners' English language learning in higher education settings. Table 38 summarises the EFL educators' overall experience with traditional and blended learning methods.

Table 38 Results of EFL educators' responses about their overall experience with traditional teaching methods and the blended learning approach.

Question	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Educators' overall experience with traditional teaching methods.	7%	13%	40%	0%	40%
Educators' overall experience with blending methods.	67%	13%	7%	0%	13%

Table 38 presents essential evidence of EFL educators' perceptions regarding their engagement with traditional teaching practices. On the one hand, an outstanding group expresses strong disapproval, which highlights the experimental group's experience as very dissatisfied. On the other hand, another group adopts a neutral posture, neither categorically condemning nor endorsing traditional methods. Additionally, among these varied viewpoints, a noteworthy finding emerges: an average of 13% of educators keep a positive thought and acknowledge the merits and effectiveness of traditional teaching approaches.

By contrast, the table also reveals that most EFL educators are very satisfied with the overall experience with the blended learning approach. The results from a smaller number of EFL learners also indicate a satisfying experience. Only a few educators consider it a neutral experience, while none of them reported a dissatisfying experience. Furthermore, a small group of EFL educators expressed a very dissatisfying overall experience with the blended learning approach. Given this analysis, the blended learning approach is perceived as an emerging trend in Language educational practices.

This concept arises because all EFL teachers (100%) have integrated blended learning elements into their teaching practices at some point. Thus, it reveals a high level of engagement with the blended learning approach among the surveyed educators. Therefore, the group of teachers participating in the study incorporated blended learning elements into their teaching practices. All of the EFL educators surveyed believe blended learning has a favourable impact on students' learning outcomes. This overwhelming endorsement reveals a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of blended learning as a teaching approach for enhancing students' learning results in EFL use.

Figure 27 presents the ranking of the factors influencing EFL educators' teaching preferences.

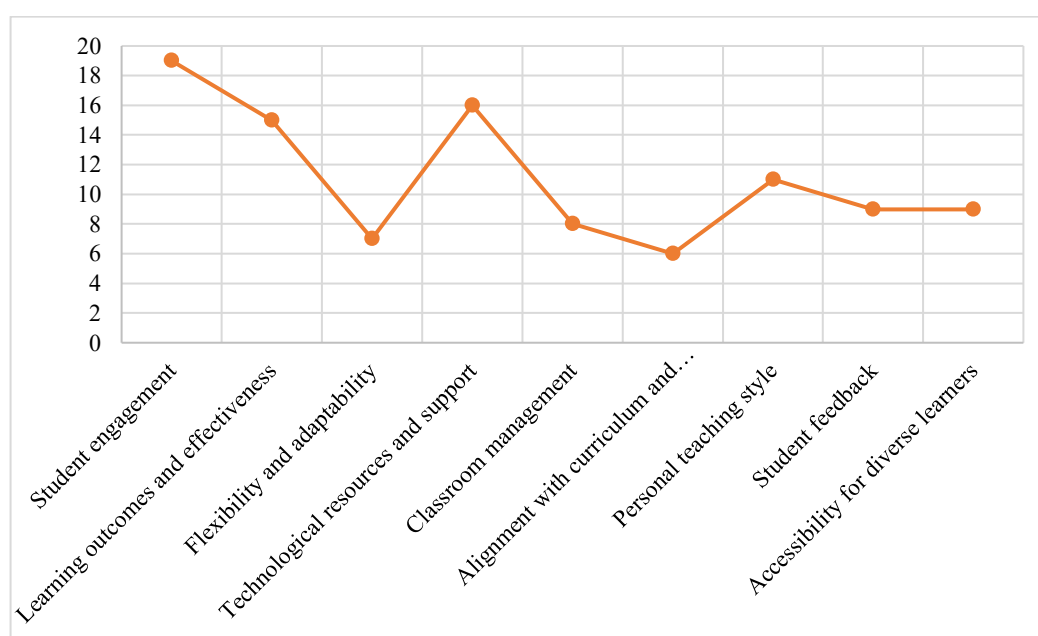


Figure 27 Results of EFL educators' responses about the factors that influence their preference for a particular teaching method.

In Figure 27, the results indicate that 'student engagement' was rated as the most influential factor, with the highest point, followed by 'classroom management'. In contrast, 'personal teaching style' and 'flexibility and adaptability' got lower points. It suggests that these aspects are perceived as less influential in shaping methodological preferences. Finally, 'accessibility for diverse learners' shows moderate but stable results among the educators.

Figure 28 illustrates EFL educators' perceptions of the benefits of traditional teaching methods.

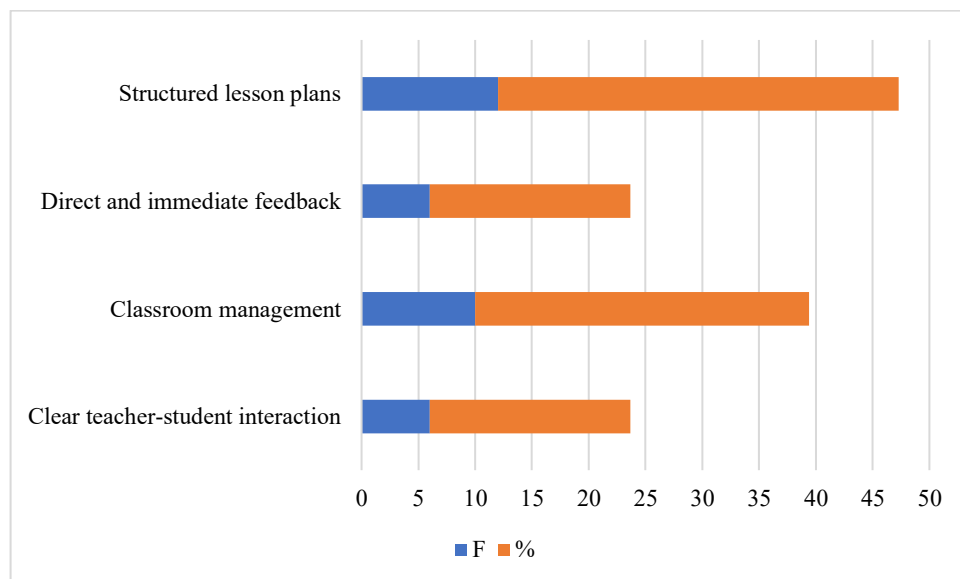


Figure 28 Results of EFL educators' responses about the main benefits of traditional teaching methods.

The findings in figure 28 reveal that EFL teachers perceive several main advantages associated with traditional teaching methods. On the one hand, 35% of EFL teachers' respondents highlighted that 'Structured lesson plans' are the most influential factor among all. Apart from considering 'Classroom management,' which was cited by 29% of EFL educators, 'clear teacher-student interaction' was noted by 18%.

Additionally, ‘Direct and immediate feedback’ was mentioned by 18% of respondents. Based on the results mentioned beforehand, which imply that EFL educators appreciate traditional teaching methods, they offer well-organised lesson planning, efficient classroom management, transparent interaction between teachers and students, and prompt feedback, all of which are seen as beneficial aspects.

Figure 29 presents the results of EFL educators’ responses regarding the main advantages of the blended learning approach.

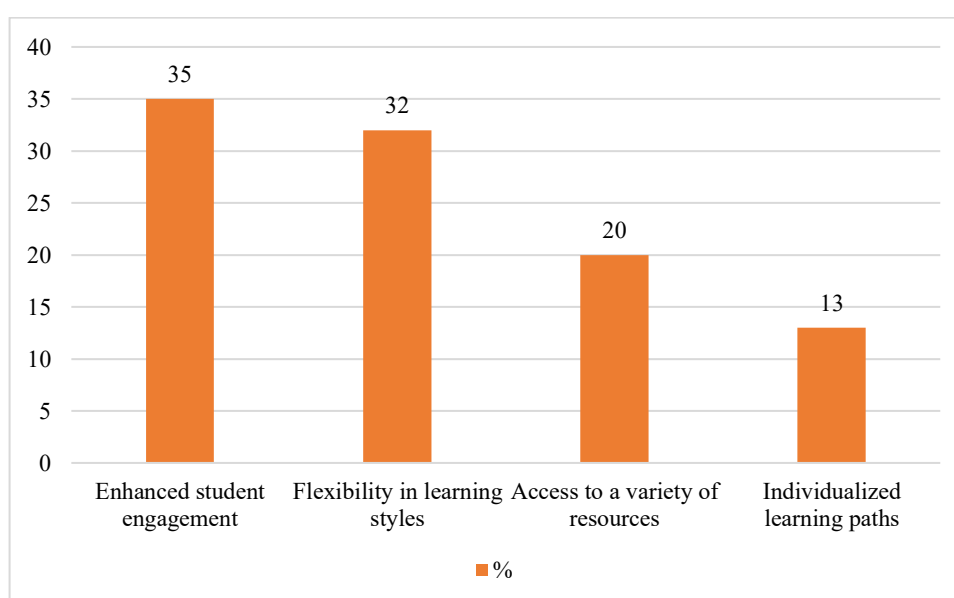


Figure 29 Results of EFL educators’ responses about the main advantages of the blended learning approach.

Figure 29 illustrates that the majority of educators expressed a markedly higher level of satisfaction with the blended learning approach compared to traditional teaching approaches. In particular, 67% reported being very satisfied with blended learning, in contrast to only 7% for traditional instruction. In particular, 40% of educators indicated being very satisfied with traditional methods, whereas only 13% expressed this feeling regarding blended learning. These results indicate a clear preference for blended learning, which aligns with the broader literature that demonstrates its potential to enhance teaching effectiveness and learner engagement.

Figure 30 shows the results of EFL educators’ responses about the types of blended

learning activities they use most frequently.

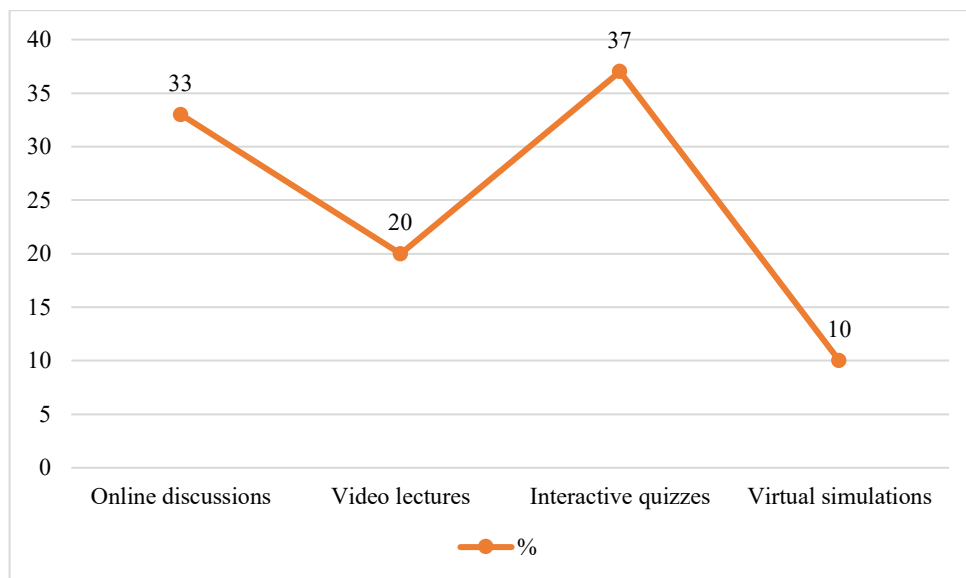


Figure 30 Results of EFL educators' responses about which types of blended learning activities they use most.

According to the data from figure 30, the results highlight that all educators have implemented the blended learning approach. The most frequently blended learning activities implemented are interactive quizzes and online discussions, whereas activities from other methods are less common. This value indicates a preference for practices and interactive strategies that foster active participation, rather than more passive learning approaches. Additionally, Figure 31 illustrates EFL educators' perceptions concerning the challenges they have faced when implementing blended learning in their classrooms.

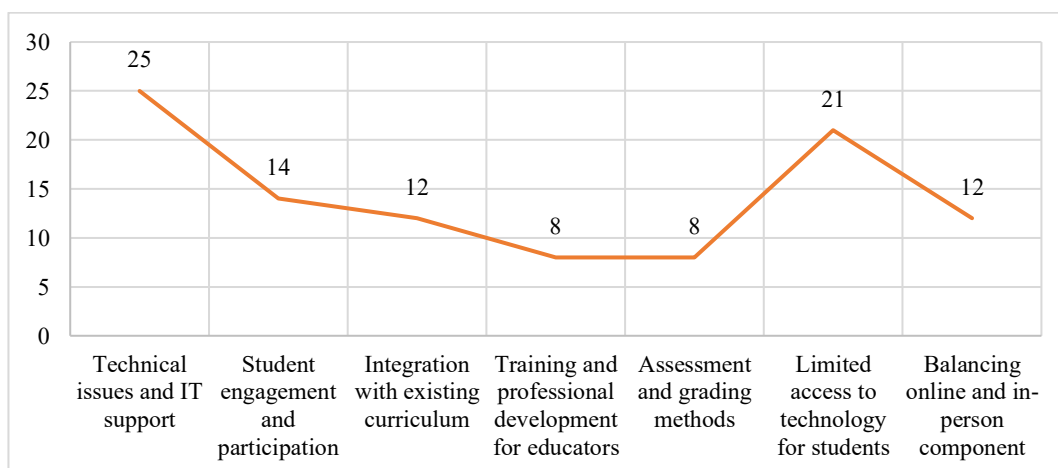


Figure 31 Results of EFL educators' responses about the challenges they have faced when

implementing blended learning in their classrooms.

Figure 31 illustrates the primary challenges EFL educators have encountered when implementing blended learning. The most frequently reported issues were related to technical and IT support, as well as limited access to technology for students. Thus, it addresses the importance of ensuring equitable access to technology resources. These results identify infrastructure and digital literacy as critical factors in the successful integration of technology in the classroom. Thus, it addresses these barriers.

Figure 32 presents the results of EFL educators' responses about learners' engagement in different learning approaches.

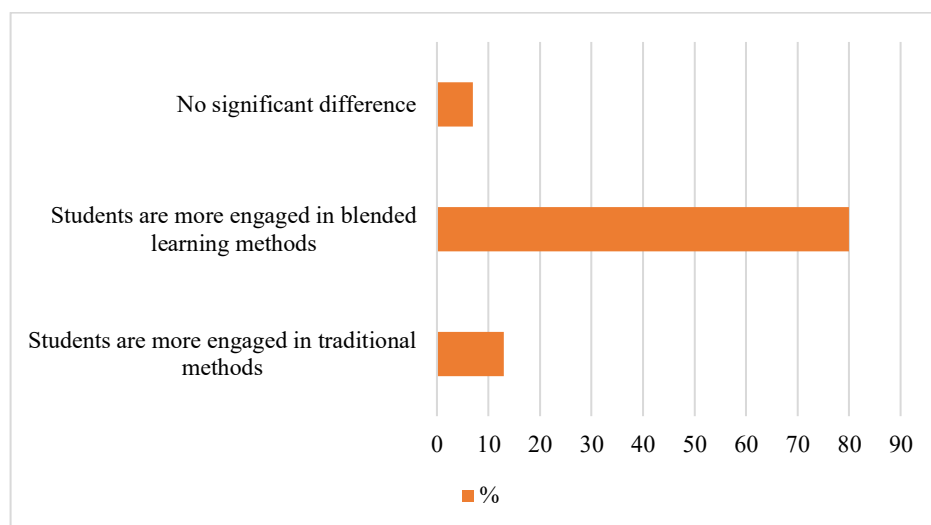


Figure 32 Results of EFL educators' responses about the engagement of learners in learning approaches.

Figure 32 illustrates that EFL educators perceive students' engagement as generally higher in blended learning environments compared to traditional settings. Educators reported that technology-supported activities tend to foster active participation and sustained interest. Thus, this perception underscores the potential of blended approaches to promote collaborative and learner-centred pedagogies. Figure 33 illustrates the perspectives of EFL educators on whether students' engagement differs between traditional and blended learning approaches.

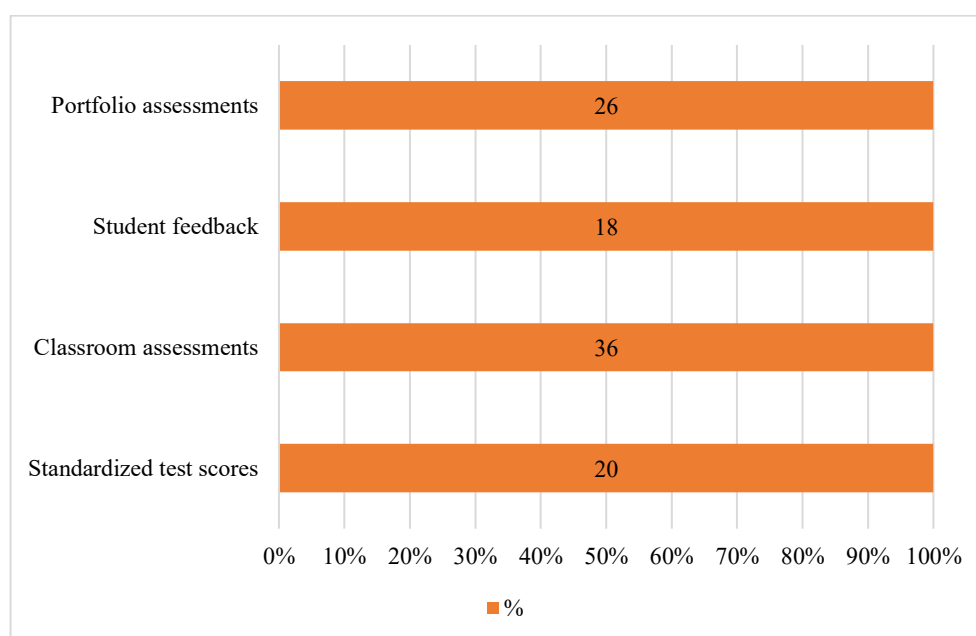


Figure 33 Results of EFL educators’ responses focused on their viewpoints about whether student engagement differs between the traditional and the blended learning approach.

Figure 33 shows that most EFL educators rely on classroom tests and portfolio reviews to evaluate learners’ learning progress. Many educators combine various methods rather than relying on a single approach. This data may suggest a shift towards more flexible and ongoing assessment practices that align with current trends in language teaching.

Additionally, student feedback was identified as a strategy to measure student learning success by 18% of the educators. To illustrate this analysis, a multifaceted approach to assessing student learning encompasses formal assessment methods. For instance, standardised tests and classroom assessments are now incorporating student feedback and portfolio assessments.

Figure 34 presents EFL educators’ opinions about the most helpful digital tools or platforms used in their teaching practice.

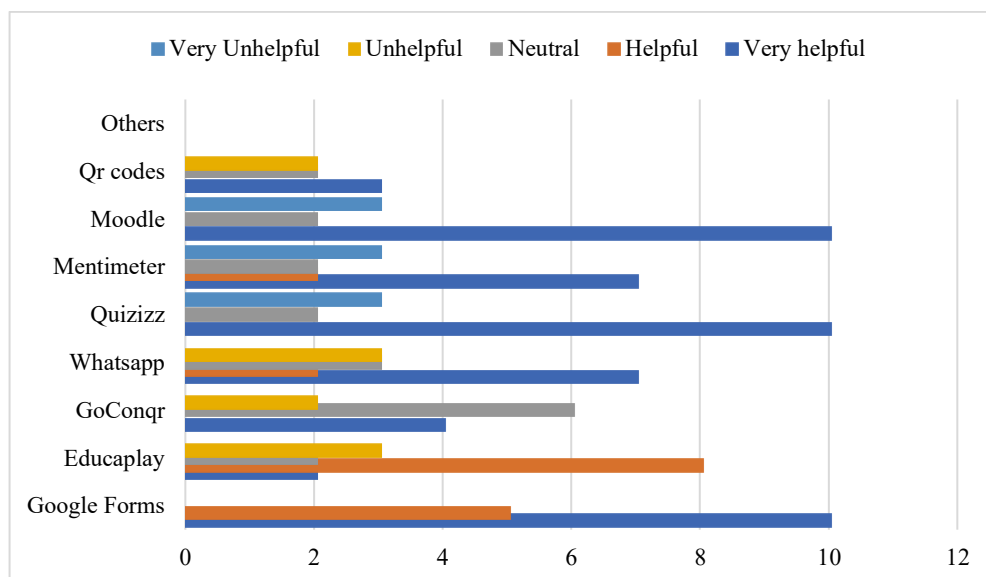


Figure 34 Results of EFL educators' responses focused on the most helpful digital tools or platforms used in the classroom.

Figure 34 shows that a diverse range of digital tools and platforms are utilised in the classroom. Google Forms, Quizizz, and Moodle emerged as the top choices, with 19% of the respondents among EFL educators. They consider these platforms the most helpful, indicating that they are perceived as particularly valuable resources.

On the other hand, Mentimeter and WhatsApp were also rated by 13% of EFL educators as the most helpful. However, GoConqr, QR codes, and Educaplay scored relatively lower percentages, with acceptance rates of 7%, 6%, and 4%, respectively. These findings underscore the importance of integrating diverse digital tools to accommodate various learning preferences and instructional needs in educational settings.

Notwithstanding, EFL educators also recommend other digital tools that can benefit learning practices, including Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Edmodo, Liveworksheets, Canvas, Kahoot, and Wordwall.

Figure 35 shows the overall teaching method preferred by EFL educators based on their experience.

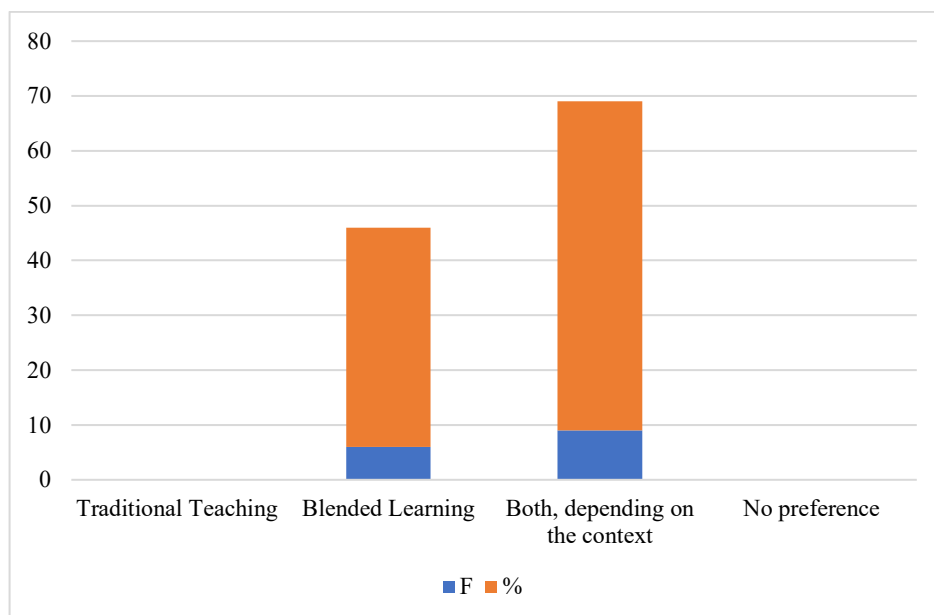


Figure 35 Results of EFL educators' responses focused on the teaching method they preferred overall.

Regarding figure 35, a majority of EFL educators indicated a preference for blended learning over purely traditional approaches. This preference reflects a recognition of the pedagogical benefits of integrating digital tools into teaching practice. However, a small number of professors still favour conventional methods, which suggests that institutional context and individual teaching styles continue to influence instructional choices.

Although teachers still favour the use of traditional methods for teaching English as a Foreign Language, there is a positive trend towards integrating technology and traditional methods in educational practices, reflecting the adaptability of educators to varying teaching environments and preferences.

Figure 36 illustrates the perspectives of EFL educators on whether technology integration in education is viewed as a long-term trend.

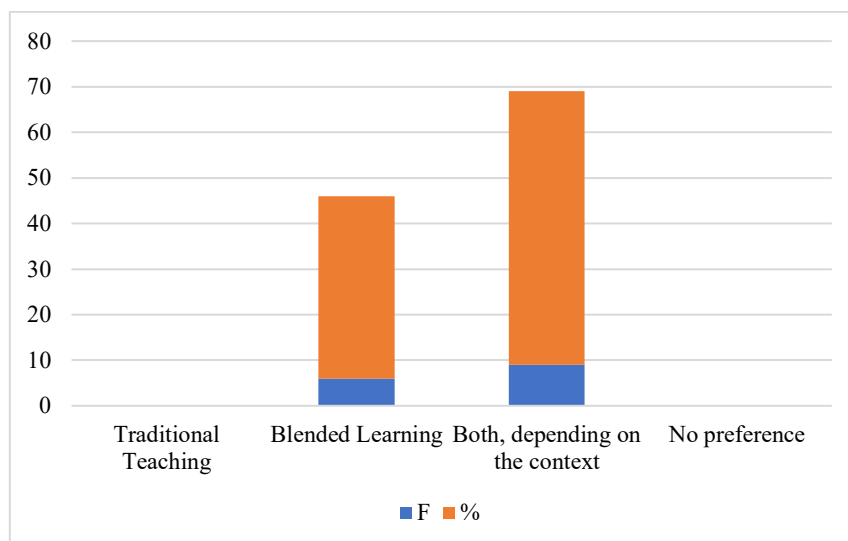


Figure 36 Results of EFL educators' responses focused on whether they see the technology integration in education as a long-term trend.

Figure 36 demonstrates that most EFL educators regarded technology integration as a sustainable and long-term trend in education. The results highlight that educators expressed optimism about the continued relevance of digital tools in enhancing teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. These values align with the global trend towards digital transformation in education.

8.1.5. EFL learners' perceptions

This analysis comprised 2 essential data points to support the main question of this study. On the one hand, section 8.5.1.1 summarises the main tendencies observed in the experimental group survey. They highlight key demographic features of learners' insights into the blended learning approach, thereby offering a clear and accessible account of the data. Section 8.5.1.2 details the analysis of social, cognitive, and teaching presence within the Col framework obtained from the sample. It enables the measurement of the reliability of the survey findings on the effectiveness of the blended learning approach in acquiring English language skills.

8.5.1.1. Perception survey results

This initial analysis focuses on the first five questions in relation to Social Presence, which address affective expressions, open communication, and group cohesion. Table 39 presents the ranking of the experimental group's perceptions regarding

self-expression in blended learning.

Table 39 Raking of the experimental group perceptions on expressing themselves.

Item	Survey Item	SD	D	N	A	SA
SP1	I felt comfortable communicating my ideas using technology in the learning process.	10.3%	6.9%	13.8%	20.7%	48.3%
SP2	I felt comfortable interacting with my classmates.	6.95%	13.8%	3.4%	31%	44.8%
SP3	I felt like we worked as a team when using digital tools.	10.3%	10.3%	13.8%	17.2%	48.3%
SP4	I felt comfortable disagreeing with other classmates while maintaining a sense of trust.	6.9%	20.7%	13.8%	17.2%	41.4%
SP5	Online discussions help me to develop a sense of collaboration.	13.8%	6.9%	17.2%	20.7%	41.4%

Table 39 highlights that Social Presence was perceived as highly positive, demonstrating a strong degree of affective expression and group cohesion (See graphical illustration in Annexe 6). For instance, items SP2 and SP3 got the highest levels of agreement, which focused on interaction with peers and teamwork as a consistent element in their learning experience. It confirms that the experimental

group felt comfortably engaged with peers and working collaboratively in blended learning environments.

Similarly, SP1 reflected confidence in using technology for communication. However, the open communication dimension below SP4 and SP5 revealed more variability, as many learners reported feeling comfortable disagreeing with others and acknowledged the role of online discussions in fostering collaboration; a notable minority, however, remained neutral. Thus, these results demonstrate that while affective bonds and teamwork are well-established, fostering richer and more inclusive dialogue remains a further educational challenge.

This second part details the data analysis of the five questions within the Cognitive Presence scale, conducted to examine the experimental group's experiences in applying knowledge with the help of various digital tools and resources. Table 40 summarises the ranking of learners' perceptions related to language acquisition through the blended learning approach.

Table 40 Ranking of the experimental group perceptions on applying language acquisition.

Item	Survey Item	SD	D	N	A	SA
CP1	Learning activities helped me ask new questions about the content.	20.7%	3.4%	27.6%	27.6%	20.7%
CP2	I used a variety of information sources using different digital tools.	6.9%	10.3%	17.2%	20.7%	44.8%
CP3	Combining new information helped me answer questions raised in communicative activities.	24.1%	13.8%	10.3%	27.6%	24.1%

CP4	I could apply the knowledge to complete my task in class or other non-class activities.	0%	10.3%	3.4%	31%	55.2%
CP5	I felt motivated to explore content-related questions.	6.9%	3.4%	17.2%	24.1%	48.3%

Regarding Table 40, Cognitive presence was most strongly evident in the resolution dimension, as indicated by item CP4, where 85% of the experimental group reported a clear perception of being able to apply their knowledge beyond classroom activities. Similarly, item CP5 highlighted high motivation to explore content-related questions. By contrast, the exploration dimension produced more variability: while using varied digital sources was highly valued (CP2), the extent to which activities encouraged new questions (CP1) was less consistently validated. (See graphical illustration in Annexe 6).

Apart from that, item CP3 also showed variation in the outcomes, with a notable proportion of the experimental group selecting 'strongly disagree', suggesting that not all learners consistently integrated new information. Thus, this pattern indicates that while blended learning effectively supports knowledge application and motivation, questioning and integrating information required more instructional reinforcement.

The results of the following five questions are aligned to the Teaching Presence scale to explore the experimental group's insights about the educator's guidance in the learning process. Table 41 outlines learners' perceptions of the educators' roles in blended learning contexts.

Table 41 Raking of the experimental group perceptions on the educators' role in blended learning contexts.

Item	Survey Item	SD	D	N	A	SA
TP1	The instructions for the use of digital tools were clear.	6.9%	6.9%	10.3%	24.1%	51.7%
TP2	The sequences of the communicative activities employed digital tools, facilitating my learning improvement.	10.3%	3.4%	10.3%	27.6%	48.3%
TP3	The instructor encouraged me to participate actively in online discussions on relevant issues in a way that helped me to learn.	17.2%	3.4%	24.1%	24.1%	31%
TP4	The instructor provided feedback that helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses relative to the course's goals and objectives.	6.9%	10.3%	3.4%	31%	48.3%
TP5	The instructor provided feedback in a timely fashion.	10.3%	0%	13.8%	17.2%	58.6%

Table 41 reveals that the experimental group generally held positive perceptions towards the Teaching Presence scale (See graphical illustration in Annexe 6). Regarding the design and organisation dimensions, most learners agreed that the instructions for using digital tools were clear (TP1) and that the sequence of

communicative activities supported their learning (TP2). These results highlight that integration of digital tools and the overall structure of the course were considered adequate.

Similarly, feedback emerged as a strong element of this scale, with a high proportion of learners valuing the instructor's comments for helping them recognise both strengths and weaknesses, which is reflected in item TP4. In contrast, the timeliness of feedback received the highest agreement in item TP5, which points to the importance of prompt responses in sustaining engagement and progress.

However, over half of the experimental group agreed that the instructor encouraged them to participate in discussion activities, as indicated by item TP3, while a notable proportion expressed disagreement. Therefore, this variation suggests that while many felt supported to contribute, others may not have experienced the same level of encouragement.

In addition to this analysis, the survey also included questions to explore the experimental group's viewpoints about using these digital tools in the blended learning context and their language skills preferences. Figure 37 presents the results of learners' perceptions regarding the most helpful digital tools or platforms used in the classroom.

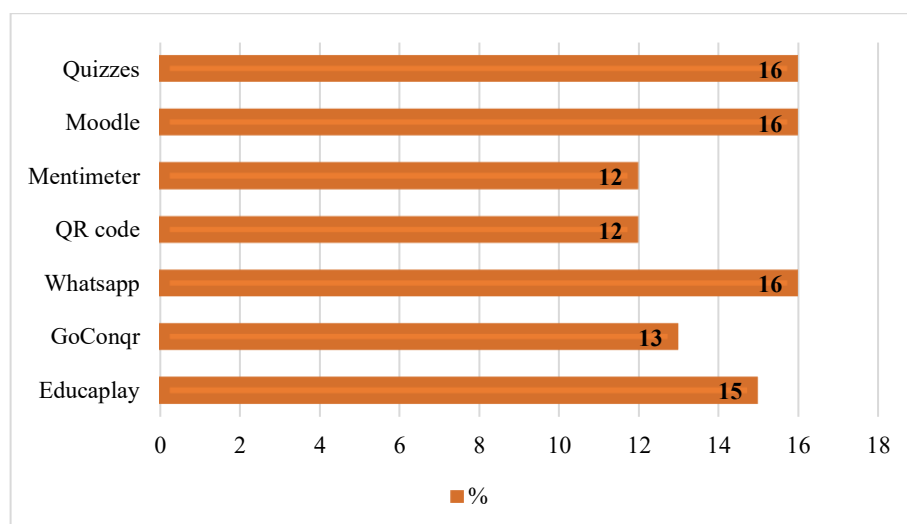


Figure 37 Results of assessed learners' responses about the most helpful digital tools or platforms used in the classroom.

Figure 37 reveals that the experimental group identified Moodle, Quizizz, and WhatsApp as the most helpful digital tools. These preferences highlight the importance of providing user-friendly and accessible technological resources that directly support language acquisition. In contrast, GoConqr, QR code, and Mentimeter exhibit lower counts, indicating a comparatively lower usage level among the surveyed learners. This distribution of usage patterns underscores the diversity of platform preferences among learners. At the same time, Moodle, Quizizz, and WhatsApp attract a significant percentage of learners. Educaplay maintains a balanced appeal, while GoConqr, QR codes, and Mentimeter cater to specific preferences or contexts.

Figure 38 illustrates learners' responses about the specific language skills they most enjoy practising and improving.

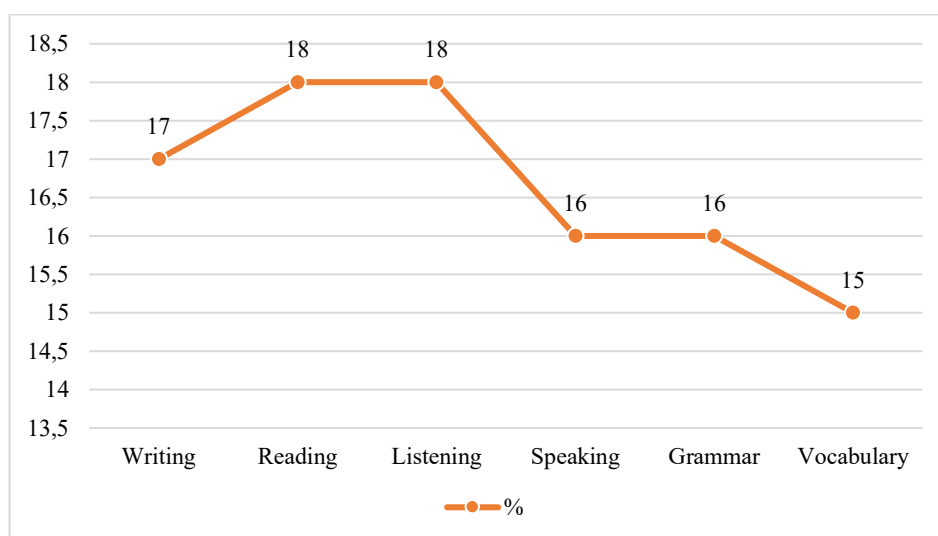


Figure 38 Results of assessed learners' responses about specific language skills they most enjoy practising and improving.

It shows that most learners in the experimental group enjoy practising listening and reading, while others also value speaking and writing, as well as grammar and vocabulary. Thus, this data provides insight into the experimental group's intrinsic motivation and points out that educators should tailor blended activities to prioritise the skills learners find most engaging. It is noteworthy that all language skills generally showed a minimum difference in their acceptance, indicating a relatively

balanced interest among respondents.

Figure 39 illustrates the learners' viewpoints on the teaching methods or activities they find most engaging.

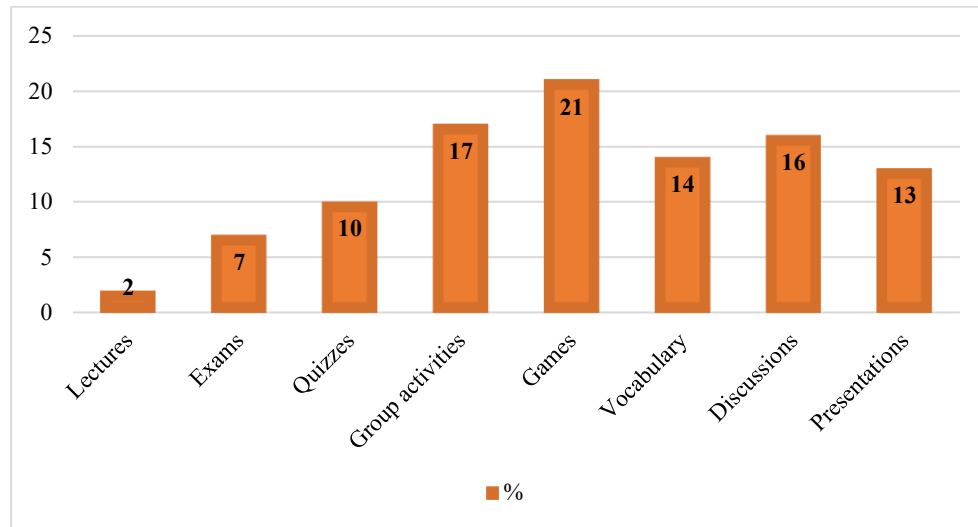


Figure 39 Results of assessed learners' responses about the teaching method or activity they find most engaging.

Figure 39 shows that the experimental group found games as the most engaging activity, followed closely by group activities, discussions, and quizzes. This dataset suggests that interactive and student-centred approaches are particularly effective in maintaining attention and fostering active learning in blended learning environments. Additionally, vocabulary and presentations also received significant engagement, as evidenced by student ratings.

However, exams and lectures received fewer responses, indicating lower levels of engagement with these activities. Overall, the participants perceived interactive and participatory activities, such as games, group activities, and discussions, as the most engaging teaching methods, based on the results.

Figure 40 displays learners' preferences concerning the degree of technology integration in their learning experience.

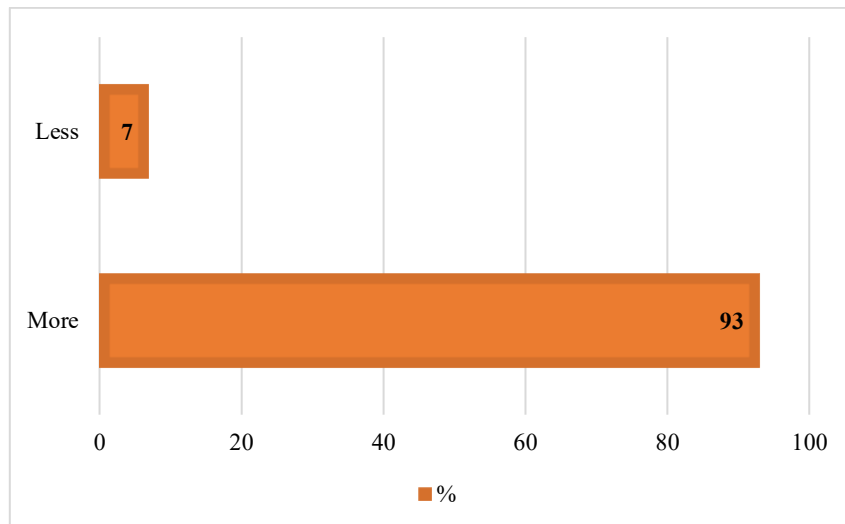


Figure 40 Results of assessed learners’ responses about whether learners prefer more or less technology integration in their learning experience.

Figure 40 indicates that the majority of learners in the experimental group favoured greater technology integration in their learning experience. In contrast, only a tiny percentage of learners preferred less technology usage. This result demonstrates a widespread inclination among the majority of learners toward the use of technology in their educational settings, possibly indicating a recognition of its positive impact on enhancing the learning process.

8.5.1.2. Reliability of the findings

This section presents a statistical measure to validate the degree of confidence in the findings from learners’ perceptions about the experiences they face in blended learning settings to enhance their English Language skills. For this reason, the community of inquiry model was employed to assess the effectiveness of the blended learning approach based on the three presences: social, cognitive, and teaching, using the method of reliability, specifically Cronbach’s alpha, as determined by SPSS software.

Social presence analysis

In this section, the results were measured within the Col model using Cronbach’s alpha test to validate how the experimental group felt about facing the blended

learning environment (Garrison et al., 1999). Table 42 presents the reliability results for the Social Presence scale, confirming the instrument's internal consistency.

Table 42 Reliability statistics of the Social Presence scale.

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised elements	Number of elements	Interpretation
Social Presence	0.938	0.940	5	High reliability

Regarding the data from Table 42, the internal consistency of the Social Presence scale demonstrated a high level of reliability, with Cronbach's alpha reaching a measurement of 0.938 and based on standard elements, a measure of 0.940. It provides evidence that the findings were above the conventional threshold of 0.70. Table 43 summarises the descriptive findings from the Social Presence scale, offering an overview of central tendencies and dispersion values.

Table 43 Descriptive statistics of the Social Presence scale.

N of item	Survey item	Mean	Standard Deviation
SP1	I felt comfortable communicating my ideas using technology in the learning process.	3.8966	1.37178
SP2	I felt comfortable interacting with my classmates.	3.9310	1.30742
SP3	I felt like we worked as a team when using digital tools.	3.8276	1.41595
SP4	I felt comfortable disagreeing with other classmates while maintaining a sense of trust.	3.6552	1.39581
SP5	Online discussions help me to develop a sense of collaboration.	3.6897	1.44181

In the first survey item from Table 43, SP1 decided the option: *'I felt comfortable*

communicating my ideas using technology in the learning process', the mean received a score of 3.90, with almost half of the students who marked (48.3%) 'strongly agree' and a strong consensus based on the low standard deviation of 1.37. It indicates a high level of agreement and strong consensus among the experimental group, with relatively low variability in perceptions. Additionally, it highlighted the fact that the experimental group found it pleasant to display positive emotions and attitudes using digital tools in the learning process. These descriptions are aligned to the affective expression dimension.

Similarly, SP2 (student 2) chose the option: *'I felt comfortable interacting with my classmates'*, with a mean of 3.93 and a low standard deviation of 1.31, indicating a strong consensus of agreement among the experimental group. It aligned with item SP1 positively, highlighting a favourable perception of the learning environment involvement and the learners' feeling self-confident in communicating freely, which supported the dimension of open communication.

Furthermore, item SP3 indicated that *I felt we worked as a team when using digital tools*, with a mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.42. This demonstrates a high level of strong agreement within the majority of the experimental group students. It means that the experimental group students increased their sense of belonging and collaborative work within the learning community. These characteristics identified by the students were mediated by technology, which constitutes a key element of the group cohesion dimension in Col. It also correlated with both items analysed previously.

For item SP4, the option *'I felt comfortable disagreeing with other classmates while maintaining a sense of trust'* was chosen. Here, the mean rating was 3.66, with a standard deviation of 1.40. Thus, it reflects a high level of agreement and consensus within the experimental group. This result demonstrated that the experimental group expressed their perspectives on a topic discussed during the period of applying the blended learning approach, thereby increasing their participation in class. This fact is aligned with open communication and coincides with the student identified as SP2.

The participant identified as SP5 marked the answer: *Online discussions help me develop a sense of collaboration*, which scored a mean of 3.69 (SD = 1.44), revealing positive insights into interpersonal interactions through digital platforms and low variability in the dataset. This finding shows a high level of cooperation among the group.

Based on this initial analysis above, descriptive statistics revealed moderate to high agreement across the five items, with mean scores ranging from 3.65 to 3.93. The highest-rated statement was the one corresponding to item SP2, and the lowest-rated statement and most dispersed was the one corresponding to item SP4. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the differences among percentages were relatively low.

Table 44 presents the analysis of item-total correlations within the Social Presence scale, illustrating the contribution of each item to the overall reliability.

Table 44 Item-Total Statistics analysis of the Social Presence scale.

Item	Corrected Item – Total Correlation	Alpha if deleted
SP1	0.909	0.910
SP2	0.915	0.910
SP3	0.810	0.928
SP4	0.882	0.915
SP5	0.673	0.954

According to Table 44, all items contributed favourably to the reliability of the construct, showing a high association between individual items and the overall scale. Nevertheless, the alpha coefficient would improve with the exclusion of item 5, thereby preserving the conceptual breadth of the construct.

Table 45 reports the average scores obtained from the Social Presence scale across all participants.

Table 45 Media global of the Social Presence scale.

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of items
Social presence	3.80	6.21	5

The overall mean for the Social Presence scale was 3.80, with a standard deviation of 6.21. It highlights that the experimental group students perceived a sense of social connectedness, comfort, interaction, and collaboration through the blended learning environment.

Table 46 displays the calculated consistency coefficients that validate the reliability of the Social Presence construct.

Table 46 Consistency of the Social Presence scale.

Source	SS	df	MS	Q (Cochran)	Sig.
Among items	1.752	4	0.438	3.681	0.451
Residual	53.448	112	0.477		
Total	55.200	116	0.476		

In Table 46, the Cochran's Q test result ($p > .05$) revealed no meaningful differences among the five items, confirming the homogeneity of responses and reinforcing the one-dimensionality of the Social Presence scale.

Cognitive presence analysis

The following data analysis presents the insights of experimental group students regarding the learning process in blended learning environments. Table 47 outlines the reliability indices for the Cognitive Presence scale, evidencing the stability of its measurement properties.

Table 47 Reliability statistics of the Cognitive Presence scale.

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised elements	Number of elements	Interpretation
Cognitive Presence	0.892	0.896	5	High reliability

Table 47 shows that, based on the reliability analysis of the Cognitive Presence scale through Cronbach's alpha, the coefficient was 0.896. It exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.70, confirming the measurement's stability and the instrument's reliability. Thus, it revealed high internal consistency across the five items.

Table 48 presents the outcomes from the questionnaire used to assess Cognitive Presence among the participants.

Table 48 Report of the results obtained from the questionnaire adopted on the Cognitive Presence scale.

N of item	Survey item	M	SD
CP1	Learning activities helped me ask new questions about the content.	3.2414	1.40548
CP2	I used a variety of information sources using different digital tools.	3.8621	1.30176
CP3	Combining new information helped me answer questions raised in communicative activities.	3.1379	1.55205
CP4	I could apply the knowledge to complete my task in class or other non-class activities.	3.9310	1.30742
CP5	I felt motivated to explore content-related questions.	4.0345	1.20957

In Table 48, item CP1, regarding learning activities, prompted me to ask new questions about the content, yielding a mean of 3.24 (SD = 1.41), which represents a relatively high standard deviation. This is positioned slightly below the 'agree' threshold on the five-point Likert scale. It demonstrates that the experimental group considers learning activities as those that stimulate inquiry. This point addresses differences in how the learners experienced the potential of activities to generate new questions.

In item CP2, it is possible to read *that I used a variety of information sources using different digital tools*, which got a mean of 3.86 with a standard deviation of 1.30. This result indicates a moderately high perception of engagement among the experimental group students with multiple digital resources. Notwithstanding, not all of them did so consistently because, according to SD, there is a certain degree of variability, revealing that the use of information sources was more common for some experimental group students than others.

In contrast, item CP3 identified that *combining new information helped me answer questions raised in communicative activities*, with a mean of 3.14 points, which is one of the lowest indicators on the Cognitive presence scale, due to the fact that it highlights considerable differences among the experimental group students' competence in integrating new information. It was successful for some learners, while for others it was hard to achieve.

According to item CP4, the selected option *'I could apply the knowledge to complete my task in class or other non-class activities'* has a mean of 3.93. It is identified as one of the highest scores on this scale. Thus, this value highlights that the experimental group students perceived the knowledge acquired as transferable to external contexts. Nevertheless, the SD of 1.31 shows that such applicability is not experienced by all participants.

The last item, CP5, specified: *I felt motivated to explore content-related questions*, which yielded the highest average score, *corresponding to a mean of 4.03*. It provides a strong level of motivation to explore content-related topics in greater detail. The low response dispersion (SD 1.21) confirms a considerable consensus.

This result suggests that motivation is a shared feature of Cognitive Presence. Table 49 shows the correlation analysis between individual items and the total score within the Cognitive Presence scale.

Table 49 Item-Total Correlation statistics analysis of the Cognitive Presence scale.

Item	Corrected Item – Total Correlation	Alpha if deleted
CP1	0.668	0.884
CP2	0.797	0.856
CP3	0.720	0.875
CP4	0.795	0.856
CP5	0.727	0.872

The data from Table 49 indicate that all items in Cognitive Presence significantly supported the overall construct, with coefficients ranging from moderate to high. The items CP2 and CP4 showed the strongest correlations with the total score, whereas PC1 exhibited the lowest score, although still within an acceptable range. Moreover, the analysis of Cronbach's *alpha if deleted statistics* demonstrated that no item removal enhanced the reliability coefficient, corroborating the appropriateness of the entire set of five items.

Table 50 provides the overall mean values that summarise participants' level of Cognitive Presence.

Table 50 Media global of the Cognitive Presence scale.

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of items
Cognitive Presence	3.64	5.68	5

Table 50 presents the overall mean score of the Cognitive Presence scale (3.64). It evidences moderate perceived cognitive engagement throughout the blended learning approach among the experimental group students. This finding highlights that, on average, learners felt motivated and able to utilise resources, although

difficulties persisted in integrating and applying knowledge.

Table 51 reports the reliability coefficients, which confirm the internal consistency of Cognitive Presence.

Table 51 Consistency of the Cognitive Presence scale.

Source	SS	df	MS	Q (Cochran)	Sig.
Among items	20.317	4	5.079	23.951	<0.001
Residual	78.083	112	0.697		
Total	98.400	116	0.848		

As shown in Table 51, variance analysis indicated statistically significant discrepancies across the five items in the Cognitive Presence construct ($Q = 23.951$, $p < 0.001$). This means that, on average, the experimental group experienced some aspects of this scale more strongly than others. For instance, motivation concerning PC5 and applicability in PC4 were consistently rated higher, while integrating in PC3 and questioning in PC1 got lower acceptance. It reveals a non-uniform development of Cognitive Presence in its phases.

Teaching presence analysis

This section examines the experimental group's perceptions of the educator's learning facilities in the development of educational paths based on the blended learning approach. Table 52 presents the reliability indicators calculated for the Teaching Presence scale.

Table 52 Reliability statistics of the Teaching Presence scale.

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised elements	Number of elements	Interpretation
Teaching Presence	0.823	0.827	5	High reliability

In Table 52, the reliability data analysis, based on Cronbach's alpha test (0.823), revealed that the Teaching Presence scale achieved strong internal consistency, indicating that the instrument measures the construct in the context of blended learning in a reliable manner. This result suggests that the five items were highly interrelated and supported a stable measure of this scale, as it exceeded the minimum acceptable benchmark of 0.70.

Table 53 summarises the results related to the internal consistency of the Teaching Presence scale items.

Table 53 Consistency of the Teaching Presence scale.

N of items	Survey item	Mean	Standard Deviation
TP1	The instructions for the use of digital tools were clear.	4.0690	1.25160
TP2	The sequences of the communicative activities employed digital tools, facilitating my learning improvement.	4.000	1.30931
TP3	"The instructor encouraged me to participate actively in online discussions on relevant issues in a way that helped me to learn".	3.4828	1.42980
TP4	"The instructor provided feedback that helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses relative to the course's goals and objectives".	4.0345	1.26725
TP5	"The instructor provided feedback in a timely fashion".	4.1379	1.30176

The initial item (TP1) from Table 53, which establishes that 'the instructions for the use of digital tools were clear', achieved a mean of 4.07. This result reflects that, overall, the experimental group agreed that the instructions for using digital tools were clear. In contrast, the low variability in responses supports this assessment.

Item TP2 '*the sequences of the communicative activities employed digital tools, facilitated my learning improvement*' got a high mean within the Teaching presence scale ($M=4$). This result indicates that the experimental group felt confident in the effectiveness of sequencing communicative activities. Nonetheless, the standard deviation of 1.31 demonstrated that there is a greater variability in perceptions, suggesting that while some learners found the sequence helpful, others may have considered it less supportive of their learning.

In item TP3, the instructor encouraged me to participate actively in online discussions on relevant issues in a way that helped me to learn, and I received a mean score above 4. It shows that the experimental group perceived the instructor's encouragement to engage actively in online discussions positively. Therefore, this result shows a general sense of motivation.

The highest mean score (4.93, $SD=1.27$) of the Teaching Presence scale in item TP4, '*the instructor provided feedback that helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses relative to the subject's goals and objectives*', reflects that feedback was perceived as helpful in recognising individual strengths and weaknesses concerning the subject objectives. Thus, the dispersion of responses was moderate, showing a largely consistent perception among the experimental group.

In item TP5, the instructor provided feedback in a timely fashion; although the score is lower than that of other items, the mean value (4.14) reflects that the experimental group generally agreed with the statement. This evidence suggests that perceptions of timeliness were more moderate, with a standard deviation of 1.30 indicating some variability in how quickly learners felt they received feedback. Feedback is particularly crucial in blended learning to maintain student motivation.

Table 54 provides the correlation results between each item and the total score for the Teaching Presence scale.

Table 54 Item-Total Correlation statistics analysis of the Teaching Presence scale.

Item	Corrected Item – Total Correlation	Alpha if deleted
TP1	0.750	0.751
TP2	0.266	0.882
TP3	0.597	0.796
TP4	0.855	0.718
TP5	0.690	0.767

Table 54 illustrates that the items' total analysis contributed favourably to the majority of indicators in the construct. For instance, items TP1 and TP4 about feedback evidenced the strongest association with the overall construct. It assures the item's centrality within the Teaching Presence scale. Conversely, the TP2 item concerning communicative activity sequences establishes a comparatively weaker correlation because its scores are below the threshold of 0.30, usually considered acceptable for a strong contribution to the scale. Thus, it suggests that it represents a slightly different aspect of the construct.

Table 55 displays the mean scores reflecting the overall perception of Teaching Presence among participants.

Table 55 Media global of the Teaching Presence scale.

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of items
Teaching presence	3.9448	5.02776	5

As shown in Table 55, the mean score close to 4 suggests that the experimental group evaluated the Teaching Presence dimension positively. It reflects a solid sense of instructional guidance and support within the blended learning environment, such as feedback and encouragement.

Table 56 reports the reliability coefficients confirming the consistency of the Teaching Presence construct.

Table 56 Consistency of the Teaching Presence scale.

Source	SS	df	MS	Q (Cochran)	Sig.
Among items	8.041	4	2.010	8.637	0.071
Residual	99.959	112	0.892		
Total	108.000	116	0.931		

Regarding the data shown in Table 56, the Cochran's Q test yielded a non-significant variation across items ($p < 0.071$), indicating that not all items were evaluated uniformly and significantly. In particular, differences emerged between the quality of feedback, in which the items were rated higher, and the clarity of instructions, which received lower scores. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha would have increased to 0.88 if the item had been removed, which indicates that the reliability of the scale might improve slightly without it.

Figure 41 illustrates the comparative results of the three presences as defined in the Community of Inquiry (Col) framework.

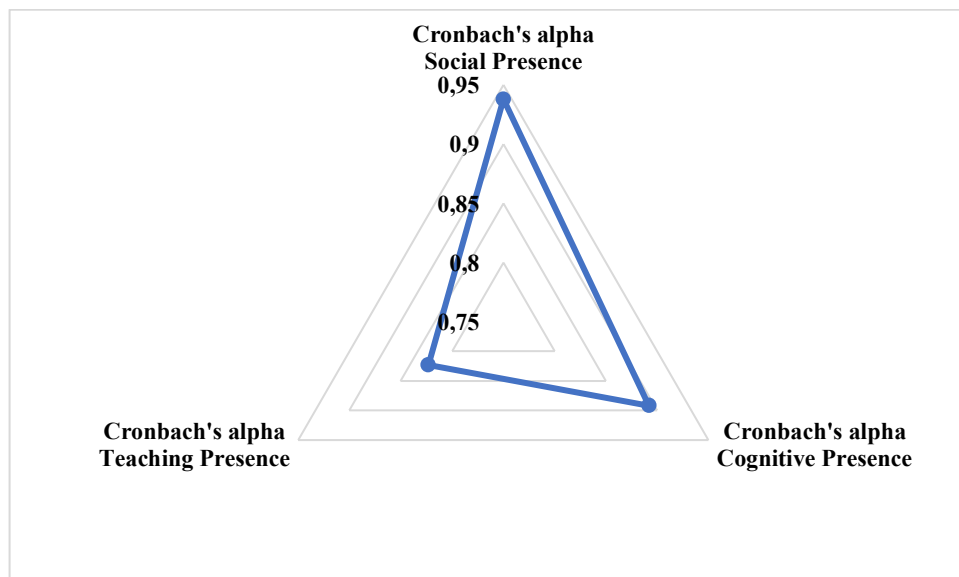


Figure 41 Results comparison of the three presences within the Col model.

Figure 41 shows that the reliability analysis revealed satisfactory internal consistency across the three instances of presence. For instance, Social Presence received the highest coefficient ($\alpha = 0.938$), indicating an excellent level of reliability. In addition, Cognitive Presence ($\alpha = 0.892$) and Teaching Presence ($\alpha = 0.823$) also demonstrated high reliability, both exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. These findings confirm that the three instances of presence were measured with sufficient precision and that the instruments used provided stable and dependable results.

Furthermore, the notably higher reliability of Social Presence highlights it as the most cohesive construct in this sample. Cognitive and Teaching Presences indicate greater variability in the experimental group when experiencing these dimensions.

9. DISCUSSION

This discussion examines how the blended learning approach contributes to understanding aspects such as factors, strategies, and benefits that shape students' learning within this approach. The findings highlight the influence of elements such as engagement, adaptability, interaction and accessibility on learners' performance. At the same time, the study identifies strategies that students employ to navigate both face-to-face and online instruction, as well as the benefits they perceive from this blended learning approach. In this section, the outcomes were interpreted in relation to existing literature, and their implications for improving learning experiences and academic achievement in blended learning contexts were considered.

Although the study was conducted with undergraduate EFL learners from a single Ecuadorian university, the results reveal patterns that may be transferable to other higher education contexts with similar linguistic, technological, and pedagogical conditions. The consistent improvement observed in the experimental group, together with students' positive perceptions of blended learning, suggests that this instructional approach could benefit institutions in Latin America and other regions where English is taught as a foreign language and where post-pandemic digitalisation has accelerated pedagogical innovation. While contextual differences inevitably influence learning outcomes, the tendencies identified in this research indicate that blended environments can strengthen language development and learner engagement across comparable educational settings.

Learning a foreign language in higher education opens up a world of academic opportunities, making learners competitive on a global scale. Additionally, learners may have access to diverse educational levels abroad. This is an opportunity that enables students to enhance their cognitive skills and share their academic experiences or research in scientific manuscripts for international contexts, addressing the gap between non-native and native English-speaking countries.

Masuram and Sripada (2020) posit that accessing spoken English is useful for learners seeking employment and getting a successful career because English is

considered a universal language that works to communicate with other languages. It allows people to understand the insights, viewpoints, thoughts, and feelings of others and guides them in problem-solving. Unlike any other language, English is the international language and means of communication. Developing communication skills may allow talented students to express their ideas to the world.

Nevertheless, learners and academics continuously grapple with several barriers that hinder their easy acquisition, among them cultural contexts, a low language learning background, a lack of confidence, technological resource limitations, inadequate infrastructure investment, and low motivational learning guidelines, as well as external influences such as a family-supported environment.

In relation to prior ideas, all of these changes depend on HEI self-regulations based on the educational system imposed by each nation's current government, which defines academic evaluation paths and the pedagogical model established. These decisions from the government affect public higher education more than private. Although private universities manage their own financial budgets and academic guidelines, they must align with the norms of the educational system.

To learn a language, learners should develop four language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. These skills will enable learners to communicate and understand English-native speakers and non-native speakers whose mother language differs from Spanish and need to learn about their culture.

According to the literature review, learners are more exposed to receptive skills in their learning experience, which in turn boosts their productive skills. In this way, for example, listening and speaking are tied to gauge communication skills, as learners can identify utterances from what they hear or see in the learning process and then produce them orally. It is worth noting that learners often struggle to develop their writing skills, and for the most part, they are reluctant to engage in tasks related to extended compositions.

During the lockdown period for the COVID-19 pandemic, the government in power

in each country faced enormous challenges, especially in educational environments, as it was essential to implement virtual classes to mitigate the spread of the virus. Thus, electronic learning (e-learning) accurately addressed this problem, enabling students from various institutions to continue their learning. Despite learners becoming engaged, some difficulties hindered the effectiveness of the knowledge.

Covarrubias Ramírez et al. (2024) study assumes that most of the HEIs closed their institutions completely or partially due to the coronavirus, and thereby mitigated the impact of this virus in education. Among these institutions, 90% adopted shifts in their entire educational systems, in which all actors, including learners, educators, administrators, policies, and facilities, were resilient against the health crisis. The adaptability of HEIs in a virtual environment, from face-to-face education to digital learning tools, resources, or a management learning system (MLS), is now affordable online.

In terms of learning a foreign Language, the coronavirus also presented unforeseen challenges to educational practices, forcing academics to adapt to online learning contexts and innovate the learning process, as well as develop new assessment methods to evaluate the work of both asynchronous and synchronous learners.

Learners increased their use of digital tools and virtual learning experiences from wherever they were located, which was seen as a positive consequence of the lockdowns and restrictions. Therefore, integrating technological methods has displaced the traditional learning approaches because of the new generation of learners who belong to this digital world.

According to Zhang and Zou (2022) based on a corpus of data from researchers in recent years, diverse technological approaches have emerged in language education to improve learning for both second and foreign languages, leveraging the effectiveness of digital technology and devices.

In contrast, Safiah et al. (2024) in their study findings, the authors argue that abrupt e-learning approach practices to reengage learners in the learning experience during

the Health crisis showed negative learner perceptions due to unstable internet connections, device limitations, and peer interaction. A new educational learning style emerged, and it was not particularly appealing. Educators were speaking for most of the class time, and as Rahim and Sandaran (2020) argue that there was a lack of computer labs, especially in third-world countries.

To support the outcomes from this study, the literature review also asserted that emerging digital technologies, which were in demand during and after the pandemic, have been increasing their application in several fields, creating new alternative approaches for teaching. Pradas-Esteban (2024) argues that these technologies enabled individuals to engage with the world's knowledge at least once a day. In relation to employment during this transition from conventional to remote learning methods, it has strongly addressed changes in higher education academic regulations, which have fostered various modalities to respond to societal needs.

Virtual learning was based on prior learning theories to yield guidelines on stimulating students and developing learning experiences and outcomes. Hence, some factors have been considered by educators and learners who gained high-tech experience, such as technology acceptance and the adoption of innovative diffusion theory. Guan et al. (2024) argue that, apart from immersing learners in a virtual reality environment, VR also raises the issue of empathy, which is essential for humankind.

Similarly, distance learning presented challenges to stakeholders due to the investment in infrastructure and academic decisions made by policymakers. Educators apply strategic and technological training to monitor online learning and foster online assessment types. Learners complete learning tasks, both synchronous and asynchronous, using a continuous Internet connection.

Tadesse and Muluye (2020) mention that the difficulties encountered were teaching practical technical skills and assessing practical skills, due to the sudden transition to online learning. This transition has been particularly challenging for learners, educators, and parents in developing countries, where educational inequalities, inadequate ICT infrastructures, and limited Internet access threaten the continuity

of the educational System.

The integration of Digital Transformation DT has been seen as an emergent educational model that increases students' motivation with self-study materials through useful learning technologies. Nevertheless, it can have financial implications for some universities, especially public ones.

In view of the aspects presented above, transitioning from conventional to distance or e-learning sessions or virtual learning may not be straightforward due to the presence of barriers that must be taken into account for the implementation of these educational methods. The implementation of distance learning can affect the effective use of learning approaches in learners' perceptions, and decrease the learners' rate of participation and learning.

Taking into account prior findings, it was essential to opt for the applicability of the Blended learning approach that combined effectively offline and online learning to rely on direct interaction in real-time or e-learning sessions to perform self or group work class activities with the help of online sources to improve multi-dimensional language development (Wang et al., 2024).

Kumar et al. (2021) also emphasise that Blended learning is appealing to higher education institutions because it provides educational opportunities and meaningful learning experiences that enable learners to access digital platforms or technologies remotely.

A study conducted by Platonova et al. (2022) it is worth highlighting that many researchers have voiced that the blended learning approach, also known as the hybrid or mixed-method approach, is an emerging approach that has gained strength following pandemic-driven shifts. This aspect occurs due to its use of a combination of two different settings, including online and in-class delivery settings. Besides, blended learning has been considered an approach that involves learners in a unique, encouraging class environment, allowing institutions to achieve academic goals while maintaining high attendance and learning rates.

For Albiladi and Alshareef (2019) blended learning can be used effectively to

develop language learners' skills. For instance, it can be used to develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing online skills, rather than traditional face-to-face or fully online classes.

In support of the prior analysis, a diverse range of learning strategies that align with the BL approach was compiled to foster a constructivist learning model, enhancing English language skills in university learners in line with societal expectations. For instance, the following strategies can be employed to develop blended learning: constructivist strategies, metacognitive learning, cognitive learning, social-affective learning, flipped learning, Mobile Language Learning (MALL), Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Task-Based Language Learning (TBL), and Management System Learning (MSL). This combination suits the blended learning approach, as it provides a dual methodology for face-to-face and online developmental processes.

Ismail and Dedi (2021) state that learning strategies are the deliberate thoughts and actions that students carry out to achieve a learning objective. These strategies are used to describe the role of strategies in improving student learning outcomes.

Metacognitive learning strategies have emerged as valuable tools within the educational process. These strategies are further reinforced through the use of online platforms that provide interactive activities, enabling students to acquire a better understanding and application of grammatical rules, as well as receive effective feedback (Lapo and Guanuche, 2024).

Technology, which is part of the Blended Learning approach, provides learners with more opportunities to develop self-directed learning skills, engage actively, and collaborate effectively within a community of learning. It is worth noting that learners who participated in this study perceived their ability to critically apply knowledge to real-life tasks. These tasks ultimately helped them to achieve more satisfying outcomes (Huynh and Nguyen, 2019).

In line with Mohammad et al. (2024) research, CALL can satisfy the needs of learners and offer valuable, innovative resources that take time to obtain from

traditional methods. Additionally, these researchers suggest that CALL facilitates learners' development of their communicative English language skills. Regarding Budianto et al. (2022) mobile learning is one of the most appealing strategies in technology learning contexts.

It is believed that intellectual growth takes place when learners actively participate and engage in the application of tasks. Therefore, tasks are useful tools to engage learners in the communicative classroom, where they become more creative, spontaneous, and prone to interacting with one another to reach desired outcomes through contemplation and strategising. In addition, tasks are activities in which the target language is used for communicative purposes to achieve an outcome (Masuram and Sripada, 2020).

It is remarkably important to convey that BL became more visual for the HE institutions during and after the global COVID-19 crisis, which drew huge shifts in academic policies, giving an umbrella of opportunities and reviewing the current boundaries. Terzioğlu and Kurt (2022) argue that the emergence of blended learning in many studies has happened due to the accumulation of evidence for transforming learning environments and introducing constructive reforms in education systems.

Within this analysis, blended learning promotes BL as part of the traditional classroom since it can be one of the best options to combine conventional and e-learning approaches. In blended learning, students develop learning autonomy by fostering learning strategies to overcome difficulties and feel confident in the educational process. It also encourages learners to engage in self-paced learning by completing class activities or homework on time. It also includes appealing resources and tools to foster a good rapport with learners. Through blended learning, learners can also evaluate each other's learning progress with the applicability of self and peer assessment, and also acknowledge feedback.

Uddin and Mc Neill (2024) posit that the blended learning classroom is an emerging approach that conveys a variety of notable advantages to innovate traditional classroom engagement by combining online academic settings. It seeks to improve

learners' cognitive experience and raise their outcomes by immersing them deeper in learning collaboration, in which learners apply their knowledge, interact, and develop their critical thinking tools, which will enable them to succeed in today's education.

It is worth mentioning that the present study highlighted several barriers, including the lack of educators' training on BL usage and technical support skills, as well as human interaction, online sources, and infrastructure limitations, as well as poor class instruction in both face-to-face and online classes. Therefore, educators should continuously be trained, and stakeholders should promote learners and educators with the corresponding training in Blackboard platform's correct usage (Al-Nofaie, 2020).

A further point to discuss is the analysis gathered from the observation checklist, which shows that the students in the experimental group became more active in the learning process as the weeks passed. It was vital for the researcher to employ a combination of learning strategies to design appealing activities that combine the best aspects of in-person and online learning strategies, thereby capturing the learners' attention. Hence, some ideas were drawn from the research findings compiled and cited in this study's theoretical framework, which addressed the most commonly used digital learning platforms, particularly e-gaming tools.

It is also essential to note that the technological resources used in class time to engage learners actively included their smart mobile devices, wireless communication, and a smart screen whiteboard. In contrast, in out-of-class activities, students changed their use of their smartphones or computer desks based on how simple or complex the assignments were.

It is also fundamental to mention platforms that can serve academic purposes. Educational platforms provide or create educational online resources, adding gaming features. Platforms such as Google Forms, Moodle, Educaplay, and GoConqr are accessible to teachers and students and help them with task development. In this study, these e-learning platforms were integrated through Moodle to complete autonomous work activities for both groups of learners in the

experimental and control groups in order to reinforce content and improve their Language learning skills. Huynh y Nguyen (2019) argue that Moodle is an appropriate tool for Blended learning. They also included in their design research plan mapped up games to balance the knowledge-building process.

According to Mustaeva et al. (2022) integrating game-based activities into the teaching and learning processes is considered a valuable tool to help learners develop their cognitive skills in a real-time and creative manner.

The Educaplay app was designed for reading and listening activities with multiple choice options to enhance learners' critical thinking and auditory understanding. Besides, the crosswords were created in order to provide learners with cognitive exercises to practice vocabulary. Similarly, GoConqr was a helpful tool that administered some reading and grammar exercises to explore another e-platform alternative.

Additionally, Genially was used to create engaging slides to immerse learners in interactive scenarios and in-depth discussions. Learners quickly reviewed content given in the classroom or virtual classes via a link to WhatsApp and in the Moodle resources zone. The WhatsApp tool also contributed to learners' involvement in language learning by sharing viewpoints and responding to surveys created within the application.

In the same manner, Google Forms were used to create a space for learners to practice writing, such as through learners' comments in a forum or brief compositions, visualised through the smart screen whiteboard. Apart from that, quizzes and surveys were provided to assess learners' cognitive progress, both online and in face-to-face classes.

In addition, Zoom was also a very appropriate platform for conducting online sessions to develop personalised communications, reinforcing content learnt or previously covered in class, and enhancing any skills. Moreover, Zoom was also applied to live class sessions, and learners felt comfortable participating through this digital tool. All the recording class sessions were attached and available on the

Moodle platform for practice at any time.

The podcast is another tool employed in this experimental study, where learners have access to engaging content that allows them to check vocabulary and grammar seamlessly before and after class, listen to how people use language in casual or professional dialogues, and practice songs with visual transcripts. It exposed them to interactive learning contexts. Some students have even started creating their own podcasts on the TikTok social network.

In contrast, during the learning process to improve writing skills, it was observed that a few learners used the ChatGPT app to write brief compositions in class with minimal effort. Therefore, monitoring their behaviour more closely was necessary, giving them more time to work on it. This finding could have been the source of the drawbacks in learners' understanding and, in their slowing down, their learning progress. Learners must be aware of the appropriate use of this type of intelligence app, which was created to assist them in learning a language, not to become overly dependent on technology.

Motivation, as one of the metacognitive determinants, plays a crucial role in starting the whole self-regulatory process. For this reason, the design of educational online games can be an excellent starting point, as the essential elements of these games are the elimination of distracting elements and an acceptable workload. (Junaščíková, 2024)

As the study progressed, both groups of learners, experimental and control, were assigned a combination of tasks to practice receptive and productive skills, as well as vocabulary and grammar. On the one hand, the experimental group was willing to interact with the e-gaming tools, which were the most widely used each week: Quizizz, WordWall, and Kahoot. These tools kept learners attentive and immersed in performing the tasks. The students grew highly more interested in Quizizz and WordWall than in Kahoot. Nonetheless, in each matchup activity with Quizizz, they were involved in head-to-head competitions that were challenging, whereas in Wordwall activities, the excitement or stress rose.

Another interesting app used was Mentimeter, an e-gaming app that served as a case in point, allowing students to review the previously studied lexicon and learn new vocabulary as well. Moreover, it was a new app that appealed to their attention because it was very visible in how the words were illustrated on the smart screen whiteboard when they registered their answers through their smartphones. The Mentimeter app can also be used for other purposes, such as conducting surveys.

Quizizz is also an e-gaming tool that encourages learners to build their self-confidence and assess their progress in an engaging learning experience. Based on learners' attitudes, it was perceived as a friendly and dynamic tool, used both in-class and out-of-class hours. It evidenced the same impact on students' behaviour. It means that, whether inside or outside the classroom, students were motivated by the use of quizzes.

Moreover, Abusamra (2024) findings indicate that learners' insights and behaviour in using individual or collaboratively second-generation Web 2.0 tools are satisfying due to the fact that they are easily operated, affordable and available, highlighting Quizizz and Quizlet as the most useful tools. Hernanz et al. (2024) define that learners perceived favourable behaviour using the Quizizz application, which aligned learning more with acquiring the skills after being involved in a knowledge experience with Quizizz.

Likewise, Zhang and Crawford (2024) conducted a study to analyse EFL students' motivation using a gamified formative assessment. The findings highlighted that Quizizz can successfully encourage learners to raise their involvement cooperatively and foster a positive attitude, while dealing with fewer difficulties. Nevertheless, other applications should also be considered, such as Kahoot.

Kahoot is a tool with several uses in the developmental process, considering that learners struggle to access it; nonetheless, once they become engaged in their activities, they become interested and want to use it. Therefore, it is essential for learners to become accustomed to participating in learning activities using this tool.

Ginting and Ramadhan (2024) developed research to evaluate the success of

applying interactive learning applications such as Quizziz and Kahoot in English Language acquisition. The findings indicate that both apps keep learners engaged in a joyful and accurate English learning environment. Regarding students' viewpoints, Kahoot is more effective than Quizizz in EFL learning because it was rated higher in several aspects, including effectiveness, joy, and perceived learning. Meanwhile, Quizzes are considered encouraging and stimulating for language learning.

Additionally, these e-learning tools attracted the experimental group students because they are continuously immersed in working with digital content, due to their field of study. On the other hand, control group students spent most of their time actively participating in class, as it took them longer to complete the activities, despite both groups attending the same field of study.

To tie back to the findings explained earlier, two quizzes were administered to the experimental group students in order to gauge their language acquisition improvement during the two terms of this study, which corresponded to Week 2 and Week 5. The purpose of these quizzes was to evaluate the effects of the approach applied and also the learners' behaviour towards the resources and materials used. As the findings presented demonstrate, there was an improvement in the learning progress of the students who participated in the study. These findings test the theoretical assumptions developed in the theoretical review section.

Putri et al. (2024) argue that, assuming learning style theories, learners can acquire knowledge through diverse learning experiences, which should fit their preferred learning style to lead to better academic achievements. Besides, Shaojie et al. (2024) assume it is crucial that educators get learners involved in positive encouragement to cater for effective learning experiences, so they can develop their self-belief and feel confident in their skills to boost their self-efficacy.

In light of this discussion, the activities designed and applied for the blended learning approach were more interactive and appealing than one-directional method settings. The activities enable them to build their learning, performing accurate cognitive exercises in writing, reading, listening, and speaking tasks. Furthermore,

most learners also demonstrated a positive acceptance of grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, the integration of a computing lab and portfolios further enhanced the effectiveness of the blended learning approach.

Concerning the strategies employed in this study, the digital platforms and resources utilised enabled learners to engage continuously, eliminating the need for traditional resources such as handouts. Their comfort facilitated the activities, providing quick smartphone responses and their confidence in verbal communication. This is another important point to consider, given that all the higher education students who participated in the study had cell phones that could be used for EFL classes.

Pantusin-Cedeño and Olives-Vera (2021) provide information on blended learning. They argue that this kind of learning aims to develop all the dominant English skills: speaking, reading, listening and writing by using tools that go beyond the traditional classroom setting. The technological materials used also helped students learn new vocabulary, which can lead to the better development of each skill in learners. These productive (speaking, writing) and receptive (listening, reading) skills are taught and developed through a balanced approach that allows students to express and communicate their knowledge through various means.

It is also possible to argue in favour of blended learning approaches that utilise online grammar content, which is suitable for reading and writing development. In the same way, listening and speaking skills gradually developed as they were applied in face-to-face interactions. Learners could control the pace and order of instruction according to their perceived needs. These learners' work and expanded access to input facilitated personalised learning paths tailored to individual profiles and goals. At the same time, the face-to-face classroom environment remained crucial for developing interactive skills through meaningful practice and collaboration, including peer review and group discussions (Wang, et. al., 2024, p.2631-2). Building on this concept, a post-test was administered to each group of learners to assess their language learning experience using the blended learning method.

During the experimentation stage, the results it was also possible to test the hypothesis and provide information on the achievement of the objectives when the post-test was applied to both groups. These two groups were administered post-tests that contained sections on grammar and vocabulary, reading and listening, and writing and speaking. The results obtained demonstrated that the experimental group students performed better than the control group, especially in the oral exam. This outperformance was also observed in the writing tasks in the tests, in which the experimental group students showed improvement over the control group students. The same comparison applied to the skills of reading and listening, in which the experimental group surpassed the control group. One important observation to note regarding the control group is the performance of students in grammar and vocabulary, which at some point showed slight strengths compared to the experimental group.

As previously mentioned, the experimental group's leverage percentage improved their reading and listening skills, followed by writing, which was the skill in which they thrived, according to the pre-test results. In this way, we can say they were slightly committed to overcoming their previous grades. Thus, it is necessary to employ more metacognitive strategies to continue improving the writing process.

Furthermore, in accordance with Spearman correlation analysis between the first dimensions of each variable in this study, a positive coefficient of 0.983 was obtained, with a significance level of $p < 0.01$. These measurements were selected in a manner that tends to raise both variables. The dimensions analysed were taken from learners' questionnaires about 'innovative technological sources integration and materials' for 'learning purposes', which can be guided by classroom-based instructions and conducted online.

These metric results suggest that the blended learning approach influences the acquisition of university learners' EFL skills, as they became actively involved when integrating innovative application tools, especially gamification, during in-class hours, despite coping with unstable Internet connections.

These results align with other studies; for instance, Qamar et al. (2024) posit that

blended learning and online learning slightly impact learners' achievement in comparison with face-to-face academic instruction. Furthermore, these researchers believe that the effectiveness of a blended learning framework depends on exploring the online and traditional learning elements, such as resolving uncertainties during in-class hours, utilising advanced software and hardware, and employing capable educators. Therefore, Ginzburg and Daniela (2024) highlight that being skilled and knowledgeable in F2F, online, blended, and flipped learning in higher education is crucial.

A preliminary review of this data revealed important insights into the reality of the blended learning approach in learning contexts in accordance with the literature background and meaningful research findings. Besides, it emphasised how the role of blended learning has been essentially taken into account in the EFL educational process, even more so in the post-pandemic period due to its dual methodology, which caters to both classroom-based instruction and e-learning with a mix of innovative resources and creative materials.

In addition to this, as discussed earlier, one of the barriers identified was connectivity disparities, which can affect various factors such as infrastructure, technological challenges, and/or socioeconomic status due to the lack of reliable internet access for all learners.

An important insight into this study is provided by the questionnaire results regarding the experimental group students' perceptions, which highlight key aspects that reinforce the purpose of this research. For instance, a large number of experimental group learners perceived a high level of pleasure with the integration of e-learning methods in the developmental process, whereas 21% of them felt slightly pleased. It means that a minor number of students were reluctant to use technology. It was due to the lack of their mobile devices, which were caused by present technical problems that were overcome in week 2. Furthermore, most learners in the experimental group's insights into classroom organisation integrating technology were favourable.

Ahmad et al. (2024) consider that it is essential for e-learners and all learners to be

connected to an appropriate ICT infrastructure that provides access to technological resources, enabling them to participate successfully in e-learning environments and institutions, thereby enhancing their online learning experiences.

It is also important to recognise that EFL educators' teaching method preferences influence students' engagement. The same influence occurs when technological resources are implemented in the classroom. Another recognisable insight is the one dealing with the teaching style of the teacher, which showed an influence on the learning situation of the students. Other factors, such as student feedback, accessibility for diverse learners, alignment with curriculum and learning, flexibility, adaptability, and minor objectives, have a lesser impact on students' preferred teaching methods.

Educator insights into the main benefits of traditional methods on a large scale consider aspects such as structured lesson plans and classroom management, followed by clear teacher-student interaction and direct, immediate feedback. Conversely, educators believe that the blended learning approach enhances student engagement, offers flexibility in learning styles, and provides access to a variety of resources. That is why 100% of the educators in this study have experienced and accepted the employment of the blended learning approach in their daily practices, utilising most interactive quizzes, online discussions, video lectures, and low-frequency virtual simulations.

Rasheed et al. (2020) highlight that the authorities responsible for the higher education institutions should provide technological support to contribute to the learning goals. It should be integrated into the curriculum policies and goals. Besides, EFL educators who participated in this study acknowledge that another factor, apart from the tasks of authorities from higher education institutions, is to consider a balance between online and in-person components of instruction to ensure learners remain exposed to learning during and after class. Additionally, Adu-Marfo et al. (2024) that HEIs should make learners perceive positive insights towards e-learning contexts. It is needed to involve learners through seminars, workshops, and orientations.

Relating to the prior ideas, Kurniawati et al. (2024) assume that the impact of these challenges might be reduced in millennial EFL educators, owing to the fact that they were born in the digital era, in contrast to academics and administrators of other generations. Notwithstanding, EFL educators of all generations must include shifts in digital competences and attitudes towards digital literacy. This implies active involvement in demonstrating skills in digital capacities, creating and transmitting digital data, accessing and evaluating information online, and managing technologically advanced preferences.

Kurniawati et al. (2024) highlight, from the viewpoint of EFL educators, that WhatsApp is used to convey timely responses to learners' doubts. Meanwhile, Google Forms, Quizizz, and Kahoot are considered interactive and diversified assessment tools. EFL educators argue that combining Google Forms and Quizizz can offer learners a range of models to track their learning progress.

Consequently, educators must possess technological proficiency to manage digital resources and devices effectively and to involve learners in the educational process. Additionally, EFL learners must familiarise themselves with technological tools to complete synchronous and asynchronous activities successfully.

Remesal et al. (2024) point out that “leveraging digital tools for ongoing assessment and feedback enhances interactivity and engagement. It is while offering professional development for instructors that equips them with the strategies needed to integrate these practices effectively”. Therefore, it is not only students who need to know how to manage technology in the classroom; it is also essential for teachers to be updated on the advances of technology in education, specifically in the teaching and learning process of EFL.

Another important skill for teachers and students of EFL is to consider feedback so errors can be minimised in blended learning. In line with Peungcharoenkun and Waluyo's (2024) research, it is important to consider that integrating peer feedback in online and offline learning experiences might effectively boost learners' language practice, EFL writing skills, self and peer assessment, and social interactions.

10. CONCLUSION

This research focused on determining the effectiveness of the blended learning approach in enhancing English as Foreign Language skills among university learners. Based on the alignment of the analysed data, the findings of this research assert the effectiveness of the blended learning approach in enhancing English as a foreign language in current learning contexts, providing meaningful insights from the perceptions of EFL learners and educators.

Due to this, it is an approach that has gained strength and has had a remarkable impact on the educational system of many countries for years, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become highly involved in HEIs. This is due to the fact that it combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning, a characteristic of the blended learning approach that enhances university learners' EFL skills.

The results also show a significant influence that has transcended the concept of learning a foreign language in today's world. It is the technological advancements and diversity of emergent learning approaches in the post-pandemic period that have also contributed to the rise of international competencies and achievement scales in academic standards. Huynh and Nguyen (2019) agree that technology without the integration of cutting-edge approaches is difficult to apply in education.

I also found that the applicability of the blended learning approach has been experienced not only in learning English as a foreign language but also in various fields of study. This assertion addresses and determines the effectiveness of BL in learning content, which is also supported by Castro-Rodríguez et al. (2021), Limaymanta et al. (2021), and Platonova et al. (2022). This fact allows for the following concise overviews to be concluded.

In relation to SRQ 1: What factors benefit the learning process of English as a Foreign Language in university students when faced with blended learning environments?

Regarding the triangulation results, several key factors were identified as contributing to effective EFL learning in blended learning environments. It

includes the availability of digital tools, learner autonomy, and the constructivist design of tasks.

In conjunction with these findings, it is essential to emphasise that the use of technology in educational contexts positively impacts language learning, facilitating its accurate and effective acquisition. It is supported by EFL educators interviewed, who believe integrating technology into the learning process positively influences students' language learning, as it encourages continuous involvement in the foreign language skills and culture.

It is possible to argue that despite e-learning being employed in several HEIs, it has evolved gradually over time after the COVID-19 pandemic period. Technology in learning offers appealing benefits, especially when applied to the EFL subject matter. For instance, new learning paths, challenges, and boundaries emerged, influenced by the learner's attitudes towards this new learning style.

The blended learning approach exhibits a close alignment with constructivist theory, which adopts key strategies that suit this research. BL seeks to stimulate learners to explore new learning environments through effective strategies and EdTech resources. This approach enhances learners' cognitive capabilities by combining learning support in face-to-face and online education, where learners take an active role in their own learning. For example, students can build on their prior knowledge or experience, boost collaborative learning, self-paced learning, critical thinking, real-world problem-solving, and self and peer-assessment, as well.

In the same context, I found that the effective employment of these e-learning tools through the blended approach contributes to the enhancement of the learner's language, especially in the productive skills. It is a way to make the teaching and learning processes more reliable and dynamic for learners. Immersing students in a diverse, engaging learning environment with cutting-edge e-resources makes them more self-confident and skilled, as they can review their learning progress continuously.

The findings in this study also address the effective employment of the blended

learning approach in HEIs. Blended learning is a valuable influence on enhancing English language skills due to its effectiveness in the educational and training process. This study combined standard and online classes with innovative e-resources and materials to enhance EFL learning in university learners. Students felt comfortable when integrating technology into EFL learning spaces, which allowed for creating several key figures to facilitate learners' cognitive language development.

Regarding Specific Research Question 2: What sort of strategies can be developed to facilitate the English learning process by means of a blended learning approach in higher education students?

Throughout the employment phase, a set of strategies was applied within the blended learning environments to facilitate EFL academic instruction. It integrated e-resources, virtual discussion forums, interactive quizzes, and project-based tasks designed to connect classroom instruction with online activities. The findings prove that such strategies promote deeper learning and enhance communicative competence.

As far as I am concerned, it is essential for teachers to consider that the learning strategies they apply in class should incorporate various activities to make learning engaging and compelling for learners. For instance, this research considered the case of metacognitive learning strategies, which were very useful in conducting highly effective learning experiences with the assistance of seamless e-learning contexts, allowing students to self-plan, monitor and assess their understanding of EFL.

All language skills need to be highly developed across metacognitive strategies, as they enable students to gauge their own learning by adjusting their listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. Nevertheless, these strategies were noteworthy in having a major effect on reading and writing tasks.

Along the same line, it is essential to note that gamification and social-effect strategies were the primary approaches employed in this study to engage learners

in the learning process. With these strategies, students were able to learn both socially and individually, as well as collaboratively. Hence, all of this was possible thanks to BL, with the collaboration of MALL and CALL technology strategies, which played vital roles in language learning contexts, as learners' access and interaction with a wide range of resources through technological devices.

Regarding EFL educators, their preference for a particular teaching method influences class criteria such as student engagement, learning outcomes, effectiveness, and the design or planning of technological resources and support. In contrast, they must also be tailored to the curriculum standards and the learning goals to create an assertive academic system. Besides, educators believe that EFL learners also need to be familiar with the use of technological tools to complete synchronous and asynchronous activities successfully. Budianto et al. (2022) confirm that the effectiveness of incorporating ICT in English language learning contexts is based on how learners' and educators' insights and perceptions develop.

It is also worth noting that all the educators had already experienced the use of blended learning methods and were aware of their effectiveness compared to traditional one-sided methods. Therefore, they strongly support the idea that educators should incorporate blended learning into their daily practices to facilitate the developmental process, integrating interactive and innovative e-resources that minimise virtual session usage to allow learners flexibility. It is also necessary to encourage learning environments with smoothly personalised communication. This statement also supports the aim of this research.

The findings emphasise that EFL educators argue that using e-tools can track learners' proficiency in formative assessments to analyse their learning rate improvement. Based on the educator's perspective, the most helpful tools are Google Forms, Quizizz, Moodle, and WhatsApp. Nonetheless, they also highlight other platforms that can be considered in daily practices, such as Liveworksheet, WordWall, Edmodo, Educaplay, GoConqr, and Padlet, among others.

These strategies demonstrated that blending traditional methods with digital tools not only enriches content delivery but also empowers learners to take ownership of

their progress.

Concerning SRQ3: How do university students perceive the effectiveness of the blended learning approach applied during the implementation of this study for the learning process?

The students' perceptions towards blended learning were predominantly positive, which coincides with the Social Presence Scale results validated through the Col model. They valued the accessibility of materials, the dynamic use of technology, and the balance between face-to-face interaction and virtual collaboration.

In accordance with EFL learners' perceptions, they expressed comfort in using technology in their learning process, and they also demonstrated a good rapport while performing activities, as they spent most of their time using smart devices. Furthermore, the digital platforms and resources employed in this study enabled learners to participate continuously, thereby avoiding the need for traditional resources such as handouts. This issue occurs because they felt comfortable giving quick responses through the use of their smartphones or had confidence in their utterances.

For example, learners in the experimental group showed positive attitudes and were often well-engaged in accurately performing each activity designed for a specific learning purpose. One of the reasons was using e-resources on and offline, tailoring them to stay focused on progress in the learning environment and acknowledge their learning. Another reason was gamification, in which learners were actively involved in interactive contexts, having fun and improving engagement and motivation. It enhances the learner's self-confidence and learning abilities, enabling them to become skilled in achieving their goals.

An example was the Mentimeter. It was used as a warm-up to explore learners' language background on the topic, introduce new words, and reinforce the ones they had already learned. It also helped connect pre-reading. Regarding this, learners started positively with an acceptable average, which was helpful in creating and programming the other activities.

Regarding this, EFL learners' perceptions aligned with the effectiveness of the blended approach in the learning process, further defining the digital tools as a high rate in learning contexts for assessing cognitive language, complex tasks, and quick responses. They also agreed on this approach, boundaries, and benefits, which match some prior scientific impact research.

On the other hand, the Quizizz e-app impacted the learners' insights, as the activities were designed to leverage their interest in competing and examining their understanding in a joyful learning environment. Thus, this tool was an important key in this research. Similarly, learners believe that Google Forms is another user-friendly digital tool that makes them feel comfortable during the educational process. It can be used in class or online, as students can not only complete tasks and immediately review their successes and failures, but also engage in self-paced learning to compare their progress with that of their classmates.

Moodle is also a platform that has positively impacted most learners' perceptions due to their prior knowledge and background in using it two years before the pandemic health crisis, thereby strengthening the learners' educational journey over time. On the other hand, WhatsApp was another appealing tool that learners enjoyed working on because they spent hours texting through this app. Conversely, using it to complete quizzes or exercises through survey options was really funny and productive. Even more so after checking their responses or opinions, which aligned with their language proficiency.

The podcast was also a dynamic tool that learners accessed to practice and reinforce their language learning through authentic content, particularly casual conversations and songs with and without lyrics. Genially was a tool for learners to examine language content guidelines before they took place in class or to complete quizzes, exams, or tasks.

Finally, the success of blended learning in this research depended not only on technological access but also on thoughtful pedagogical design, teacher preparation, and institutional support. Blended learning should therefore be seen not as a substitute for traditional instruction but as a complementary and flexible model that

fosters learner autonomy, communicative competence, and motivation.

While these findings support the hypothesis of this study and reinforce the pedagogical potential of blended learning as a sustainable model for higher education, it is possible to say that the strategies applied in this study can also be considered for different educational contexts in which English as a Foreign Language and blended learning provide the possibility to improve the knowledge of English in and outside the classrooms. The findings in this study also open up new lines of inquiry. The limitations identified in this study establish clear boundaries for interpretation, while also suggesting directions for improvement and future exploration.

Building on these findings, it is also important to emphasise that their applicability extends beyond the immediate instructional setting, offering valuable insights for institutions seeking to strengthen English language learning through flexible and technology-enhanced approaches. The findings of this study reveal that blended learning constitutes a promising approach not only for the Ecuadorian EFL context but also for institutions in other countries where flexible instructional models are becoming increasingly relevant. The combination of online and face-to-face components demonstrated potential to enhance linguistic performance, motivation and autonomy, which are common challenges in university-level language education. Future research could replicate or adapt the present design in different cultural, technological or curricular environments to examine the extent to which these outcomes can be generalised. Such comparative investigations would help expand the evidence base on blended learning and further inform policy and pedagogical decision-making in higher education. These conclusions reinforce the value of blended learning as a long-term strategy for enhancing English language education in higher education contexts.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the findings are encouraging and confirm the effectiveness of the blended learning approach in enhancing EFL skills, several limitations must be acknowledged. On the one hand, I considered that the study was conducted with a limited sample of participants within a single higher education institution, which may limit the generalisability of the results to other contexts. The intervention was also relatively short, preventing a more comprehensive evaluation of long-term language development and retention.

Further, factors such as technological access and Internet connectivity influenced participation and engagement levels during the intervention. To cite an instance, all experimental group students brought their mobile devices; however, only 40% of them had access to the Internet, which was necessary for developing the e-activities. They needed to connect to the campus's open wireless connection. HEIs show little investment in ICT infrastructure and some e-resources, such as smart screens, whiteboards, better computing labs, and improved wireless connections throughout the campus.

Other limitations can appear when educators show low digital literacy competences to manage e-resources and other technological advancements accurately so that they can provide clear instructions and design creative and appealing activities to engage learners actively in the teaching-learning process.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes to the ongoing advancement of knowledge in foreign Languages in higher education settings, supporting future educational practices and policymakers, particularly in emerging approaches. From my own perspective as a researcher, I intend to continue investigating how blended learning can evolve to better address the changing needs of EFL learners in higher education. In future studies, I would like to explore how adaptive learning technologies, artificial intelligence, and multimodal platforms can further personalise instruction and enhance student engagement.

I could also expand the sample to include students from different universities or

educational levels, for instance, a trilingual high school. It allows for comparative analysis across diverse contexts. I could also extend the duration of the intervention, which helps assess the sustainability of learning outcomes and the continued motivation of learners over time.

Moreover, all of these findings will support and enhance the quality of education to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education, as well as promote lifelong learning opportunities for all people interested in learning. In aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, one of the national investment priorities must be education financing. This paper claims and supports the need for training teachers and students, not only in technology but also in the use of blended learning alternatives for foreign language classrooms.

In addition, the findings in this study can provide vital insights to reduce inequalities. That is in accordance with goal 9, based on "Inequality threatens long-term social and economic development, harms poverty reduction and destroys people's sense of fulfilment and self-worth" (United Nations, 2024).

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Formato de juicio de expertos

Validación de instrumentos

FORMATO DE VALIDACIÓN			
Instrumento N° 1: Entrevista Semiestructurada dirigida a estudiantes			
Guion de preguntas			
Ítem	Criterios a evaluar	Si	No
1	El instrumento tiene claridad en la redacción	X	
2	Las preguntas tienen claridad en la redacción	X	
3	Las preguntas formuladas en el instrumento inducen a una respuesta (sesgo)	X	
4	El número de preguntas y su estructura son suficientes para recoger la información	X	
5	El instrumento tiene coherencia con el objetivo propuesto	X	
6	Considera que se debe modificar alguna pregunta	X	
7	Los temas tratados permiten el logro del objetivo de la investigación	X	
8	El lenguaje es adecuado con el nivel de información	X	
Validez del instrumento			
Aplicable		X	No aplicable
Observaciones del experto			
Ninguna – Cumple.			
Validado por		C.C. N°	Fecha
PhD. Jaime Rodrigo Moreno Vallejo MSc. Resolución Doctorado N.15944 de 14 de agosto 2017 Ministerio de Educación Colombia. Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Business Management Queen Margaret University United Kingdom and Slippery Rock University United States. Master Degree in International Relations Complutense University Spain. Public Policy at Dixon University Center United States		1759052861	10 de mayo 2025

Firma	Teléfono	e-mail
 Firmado electrónicamente por: JAIIME RODRIGO MORENO VALLEJO Validar únicamente con FirmaEC	+593989603310	jaime.moreno@upec.edu.ec

ANNEX 2

Pre-test: moodle platform

Question 1

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.50

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

How _____ time do you spend to edit a video?

Select one:

☐ a. 30 minutes

☐ b. none

☐ c. much

Question 2

Not yet answered

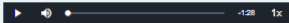
Marked out of 0.20

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

Listen to three short dialogues and answer the questions. Choose a, b or c.



How much coffee does the man drink a day?

Select one:

☐ a. 3 cups

☐ b. 4 cups

☐ c. 2 cups

Question 3

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.05

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v2 \(latest\)](#)

My friends and I _____ for BBC News for a long time.

Select one:

☐ a. have worked

☐ b. worked

☐ c. has worked

Question 4

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.05

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

John _____ Ana's film edition while she was having a snack yesterday.

Select one:

☐ a. oversaw

☐ b. oversee

☐ c. overseen

Question 5

Not yet answered

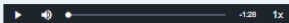
Marked out of 0.20

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

Listen to three short dialogues and answer the questions. Choose a, b or c.



What does Melissa never eat?

Select one:

☐ a. vegetables

☐ b. meat

☐ c. fruit

Question 6

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.05

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

_____ is a news article or report.

Select one:

☐ a. story

☐ b. broadsheet

☐ c. tabloid

Question 7

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.10

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

The editor _____ the headlines of the newspaper several times because he corrected spelling mistakes last night.

Select one:

☐ a. adjusted

☐ b. have adjusted

☐ c. has adjusted

Question 8
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.10
Flag question
Add question
V1 (latest)

Common communication channels in mass communication includes:

Select one:

- ☐ a. social media and print media.
- ☐ b. television and radio.
- ☐ c. television, radio, social media and print media.

Question 9
Not yet answered
Marked out of 2.00
Flag question
Add question
V1 (latest)

Write a paragraph about yourself. (Personal data, daily / spare-time activities, temporal actions)

Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Help

Undo Redo Bold Italic Link Unlink Bulleted List Numbered List Indent Outdent Decrease Indent Increase Indent Table

p

0 words tiny

Question 10
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.10
Flag question
Add question
V1 (latest)

Read and choose True or False.

THE STARFISH STORY

An old man walked across the beach until he came across a young boy throwing something into the breaking waves. Upon closer inspection, the old man could see that the boy was tossing stranded starfish from the sandy beach, back into the ocean.

"What are you doing, young man?" He asked.

"If the starfish are still on the beach when the sun rises, they will die," the boy answered.

"That is ridiculous. There are thousands of miles of beach and millions of starfish. It doesn't matter how many you throw in; you can't make a difference."

"It matters to this one," the boy said as he threw another starfish into the waves. "And it matters to this one."

There are few miles of beach but a lot of starfish.

Select one:

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Question 11
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.10
Flag question
Add question
V1 (latest)

Read and choose True or False.

THE STARFISH STORY

An old man walked across the beach until he came across a young boy throwing something into the breaking waves. Upon closer inspection, the old man could see that the boy was tossing stranded starfish from the sandy beach, back into the ocean.

"What are you doing, young man?" He asked.

"If the starfish are still on the beach when the sun rises, they will die," the boy answered.

"That is ridiculous. There are thousands of miles of beach and millions of starfish. It doesn't matter how many you throw in; you can't make a difference."

"It matters to this one," the boy said as he threw another starfish into the waves. "And it matters to this one."

The starfish can survive out of the ocean.

Select one:

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Question 12
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.10
Flag question
Add question
V1 (latest)

Complete the missing words.

Patrick felt ill because he so much.

Listening transcript

1. A: Hey, Melissa. Are you a vegetarian?
B: No, I'm not. But all my friends are, so I don't often eat meat when we go out.
A: Do you like fruit and vegetables?
B: Vegetables are OK, but I can't stand fruit.
A: That's why you never have any in your refrigerator.
B: Yep.

2. A: Are you ready to order?
B: Yes, I'd like a tuna sandwich, please.
A: With tomato and onion?
B: Yes, please.
A: Would you like some fries with that?
B: No, thanks.
A: Anything to drink?
B: Yes, a soda, please.
A: Small, medium or large?
B: Large.

3. A: Excuse me, can I ask you a few questions for a survey?
B: Sure.
A: Thank you. How much coffee do you drink a day?
B: Now, let's see, I drink a cup at home before I go to work. Then, I drink some more coffee at work.
A: How many cups? Two?
B: Yes, two at work.
A: So, that's three cups all together, right?
B: No, wait. I also drink another cup at home after work. So, four.
A: I see.

Criteria for Assessing Writing

Aspects	Great 0.31 – 0.40	Good 0.21 – 0.30	Fair 0.11 – 0.20
The writing is built around a purpose.			
The writing makes sense.			
All part of the text belongs.			
The writing is well-organized.			
Use correct punctuation.			
Use correct capitalization.			
Spelling.			

Criteria for Assessing Speaking

Aspects	Great 0,4	Satisfactory 0,3	Needs Improvement 0,20	Below – Does Not Meet Expectations 0,10
Content and Vocabulary (e.g. verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word order)	Specific vocabulary from the topic is used accurately. All ideas are clear and appropriate for the context.	Specific vocabulary is not used, but general vocabulary is used accurately. Most ideas are clear and appropriate for the context.	General vocabulary is used, though not always correctly. Some ideas are unclear.	Little general vocabulary is used correctly. Most ideas are unclear.
Language (e.g. verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word order)	All verbs are used correctly. Word order is consistently correct.	Most verbs are used correctly. Word order is generally correct.	Verbs are not used correctly. Word order is inconsistent and incorrect.	Verbs are missing or incorrect. Word order follows no structure.
Pronunciation (e.g. individual sounds, stress, intonation)	Pronunciation is clear and accurate. Very little interference from the first language is present, and the student is easily understood.	Almost all sounds are pronounced clearly and accurately. Little interference from the first language is present, and the student is understood.	Some sounds are not pronounced clearly. The student can generally be understood, but interference from the first language is present and causes confusion.	Many sounds are pronounced incorrectly. Heavy interference from the first language disrupts understanding.
Fluency and Communicative Ability (e.g. pace, flow, on topic, ease of speaking)	Speaking is conversational, flowing smoothly and logically. Meaning is complete and clear; there is no need for follow-up questions from the instructor.	Speaking generally flows smoothly, and there is very little hesitation. Meaning is communicated, but the instructor may ask for clarification.	Speaking is slow and halting. Meaning is unclear, so the instructor must ask for clarification.	Speaking is very choppy. Little or no meaning is communicated. The instructor guides the conversation with questions.

Speaking rubric adapted from Teaching Portfolio web-site

ANNEX 3

Post-test: Moodle platform

Question 1

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.20

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

Read the text below and Choose True or False.

A bad night to have an accident

Linda was driving back from her friend's house through the countryside. It was raining, so she was driving slowly because she didn't want to have an accident. Suddenly, she lost control of the car and crashed into a tree. Luckily, she wasn't injured, but she couldn't understand what had happened. She got out of her car to take a look at the damage. Immediately, she noticed that her front tire was flat and realized it was the cause of the accident. She tried to call her friend for help, but her cell phone had no battery. It was raining very hard, so she got in her car to wait for it to stop. She waited and waited, but the rain didn't stop, so she decided to change the tire on her own. It was really hard work, but after half an hour she managed to fix it. As soon as she finished, the rain stopped and she felt great. She got in the car, but she couldn't start the engine. So, she sat there and waited again. Then she tried again, but nothing. As she was thinking about what to do next, it started raining again. In the end, she took an umbrella from the trunk and walked back along the road. At about midnight, Linda arrived at her friend's house. Her friend was shocked to see her. It was too late to do anything, so she stayed the night and called for a mechanic in the morning. It was an experience she never wants to have again.

She had to change the tire for more than an hour.

Select one:

☐ True

☐ False

Question 2

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.20

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

Tom _____ with John tonight. They have planned it for days.

Select one:

☐ a. will probably meet

☐ b. might meet

☐ c. will definitely meet

Question 3

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.10

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

Read and choose the correct option.

Yesterday Tom and Janice _____ to the zoo around one. They _____ many kinds of animals. They stayed at the zoo for two hours.

Select one:

☐ a. were going, were seeing

☐ b. was going, saw

☐ c. went, saw

Question 4

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.20

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

Our community manager _____ her social networks 15 times a day. Now, she checks them every 5 minutes.

Select one:

☐ a. used to check

☐ b. checked

☐ c. was checking

Question 5

Not yet answered

Marked out of 0.20

[Flag question](#)

[Edit question](#)

[v1 \(latest\)](#)

_____ I finish work, I will go home today.

Select one:

☐ a. before

☐ b. until

☐ c. as soon as

Question 6
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.20
Flag question
Add question
Report

Read the text and choose True or False.

A bad night to have an accident

Linda was driving back from her friend's house through the countryside. It was raining, so she was driving slowly because she didn't want to have an accident. Suddenly, she lost control of the car and crashed into a tree. Luckily, she wasn't injured, but she couldn't understand what had happened. She got out of her car to take a look at the damage. Immediately, she noticed that her front tire was flat and realized it was the cause of the accident. She tried to call her friend for help, but her cell phone had no battery. It was raining very hard, so she got in her car to wait for it to stop. She waited and waited, but the rain didn't stop, so she decided to change the tire on her own. It was really hard work, but after half an hour she managed to fix it. As soon as she finished, the rain stopped and she felt great. She got in the car, but she couldn't start the engine. So, she sat there and waited again. Then she tried again, but nothing. As she was thinking about what to do next, it started raining again. In the end, she took an umbrella from the trunk and walked back along the road. At about midnight, Linda arrived at her friend's house. Her friend was shocked to see her. It was too late to do anything, so she stayed the night and called for a mechanic in the morning. It was an experience she never wants to have again.

She arrived home because she couldn't start the engine.

Select one:

- ☐ True
☐ False

Question 7
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.20
Flag question
Add question
Report

Ted isn't here. He's _____ to the mall.

Select one:

- ☐ a. visited
☐ b. gone
☐ c. been

Question 8
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.20
Flag question
Add question
Report

After they _____ to the radio station, I _____ on the script.

Select one:

- ☐ a. had arrived/wrote
☐ b. arrived/had written
☐ c. arrived/had written

Question 9
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.20
Flag question
Add question
Report

My boss _____ to create a new program next season.

Select one:

- ☐ a. is planning
☐ b. are going
☐ c. will

Question 10
Not yet answered
Marked out of 0.20
Flag question
Add question
Report

Read the text and answer true or false.

A bad night to have an accident

Linda was driving back from her friend's house through the countryside. It was raining, so she was driving slowly because she didn't want to have an accident. Suddenly, she lost control of the car and crashed into a tree. Luckily, she wasn't injured, but she couldn't understand what had happened. She got out of her car to take a look at the damage. Immediately, she noticed that her front tire was flat and realized it was the cause of the accident. She tried to call her friend for help, but her cell phone had no battery. It was raining very hard, so she got in her car to wait for it to stop. She waited and waited, but the rain didn't stop, so she decided to change the tire on her own. It was really hard work, but after half an hour she managed to fix it. As soon as she finished, the rain stopped and she felt great. She got in the car, but she couldn't start the engine. So, she sat there and waited again. Then she tried again, but nothing. As she was thinking about what to do next, it started raining again. In the end, she took an umbrella from the trunk and walked back along the road. At about midnight, Linda arrived at her friend's house. Her friend was shocked to see her. It was too late to do anything, so she stayed the night and called for a mechanic in the morning. It was an experience she never wants to have again.

Linda crashed her car because she got a flat tire ____

Select one:

- ☐ True
☐ False

Listening

Listen to three short dialogues and answer the questions. Choose a or b.



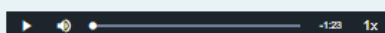
What did Sandra do after lunch?

Select one:

- ☐ a. She went shopping
- ☐ b. She went to the gym.

Listening

Listen to three short dialogues and answer the questions. Choose a or b.



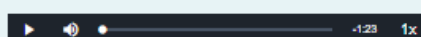
When did Victor graduate?

Select one:

- ☐ a. In 2002.
- ☐ b. In 2003

Listening

Listen to three short dialogues and answer the questions. Choose a or b.



What happened to Ray?

Select one:

- ☐ a. He hurt his knee.
- ☐ b. He broke his leg.

Writing

Write a narrative essay on recent events with the words below:

Suddenly / (un)surprisingly / after that / next / then / by the time / a (little) while later / after a (little) while / meanwhile / eventually / in the end.

Use pictures to describe it.

Use the writing criteria to write correctly.

Criteria for Assessing Writing task

	Great 0.71 – 1	Good 0.51 – 0.70	Okay 0.31 – 0.50	Fair 0.10 - 0.30
The writing is built around a purpose.				
The writing makes sense.				
The writing is well-organized.				
Use correct punctuation.				
Use correct capitalization.				
Spelling.				
The writing shows appropriate use of the grammar tense and vocabulary.				

Listening transcript

1. A: Hi, Sandra!

B: Hello there.

A: So, did you enjoy your lunch yesterday?

B: Yes. It was a great place. Thanks

again.

A: Don't mention it. So, did you go to the gym after?

B: Well, I went shopping first, then I went to the gym in the evening.

A: You're right. It's not a good idea to exercise after eating.

2. A: Hey, Victor. When did you get your first job?

B: Back in 2003. I was a waiter at a friend's restaurant.

A: Was that right after you graduated?

B: No, not right after. I graduated in 2002 but I didn't work for about a year. I went to Europe.

A: Wow! That sounds like fun.

B: It was awesome.

3. A: Hello, Ray!

B: Hi.

A: What's up with your leg?

B: I had a car accident yesterday. I was in my brother's car.

A: Oh no, that's awful! How bad is your leg? Did you break it?

B: No, but I hurt my knee. My brother broke his leg.

A: Really? Poor, Jerry. Here, let me help you.

B: Thanks.

ANNEX 4

OBSERVATION CLASSROOM CHECKLIST

OBSERVATION CLASSROOM CHECKLIST

Observer: Cecilia Dahik

Date: 20-06-2023

On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall learning experience in this class? (1 being low, 5 being high)

Criteria	score
Classroom Environment:	
Physical Setting:	
Neatness and organization of the classroom.	4
Adequate seating arrangements for student engagement.	3
Availability and use of instructional materials.	4
Technological Resources:	
Presence and functionality of technology tools (e.g., Smart screen whiteboard, computers, etc.).	5
Effective integration of technology into the lesson.	4
Teaching Methodology:	
Physical Setting:	
Neatness and organization of the classroom.	3
Adequate seating arrangements for student engagement.	3
Availability and use of instructional materials.	4
Technological Resources:	
Presence and functionality of technology tools (e.g., Smart screen whiteboard, computers, etc.).	4
Effective integration of technology into the lesson.	4
Teaching Methodology:	
Introduction:	
Clear articulation of lesson objectives.	4
Engaging introduction to capture students' attention.	4
Instructional Strategies:	
Variety in instructional methods (e.g., lecture, group work, discussions).	4
Application of pre-during-post reading strategies.	5
Student Engagement:	
Active participation of students.	5
Monitoring and encouragement of student contributions.	5
Use of questioning techniques to stimulate critical thinking.	4
Differentiation:	
Adaptation of teaching methods to address diverse learning styles.	4
Provision for students requiring additional support.	4
Technology Integration:	
Use of Digital Tools:	5
Integration of digital tools (e.g., Google Forms, GoConqr, Educaplay).	5
Effectiveness in utilizing technology to enhance learning.	5
Student Interaction with Technology:	
Student engagement with technology tools.	5
Evidence of students utilizing digital resources for learning.	5
Assessment and Feedback:	
Assessment Strategies:	

Employment of formative and summative assessment strategies.	4
Clarity in assessment criteria.	4
Feedback:	
Timely and constructive feedback to students.	4
Encouragement of peer assessment when applicable.	4
Conclusion:	
Lesson Closure:	
Summarization of key points.	4
Connection to the next lesson or learning objectives.	4

Suggestions:

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Ss willing to work through their smartphones. - Their competitiveness was boosted by applying a formative activity through the Quizizz app.	- Two Ss didn't bring their smartphones because of technical problems. - The Internet was unstable.

Signature: _____

[Handwritten Signature]

OBSERVATION CLASSROOM CHECKLIST

Observer: Cecilia Dahik

Date: 3-07-2023

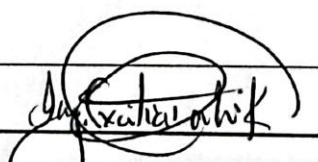
On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall learning experience in this class? (1 being low, 5 being high)

Criteria	score
Classroom Environment:	
Physical Setting:	
Neatness and organization of the classroom.	4
Adequate seating arrangements for student engagement.	4
Availability and use of instructional materials.	4
Technological Resources:	
Presence and functionality of technology tools (e.g., Smart screen whiteboard, computers, etc.).	5
Effective integration of technology into the lesson.	5
Teaching Methodology:	
Physical Setting:	
Neatness and organization of the classroom.	4
Adequate seating arrangements for student engagement.	4
Availability and use of instructional materials.	4
Technological Resources:	
Presence and functionality of technology tools (e.g., Smart screen whiteboard, computers, etc.).	4
Effective integration of technology into the lesson.	4
Teaching Methodology:	
Introduction:	
Clear articulation of lesson objectives.	4
Engaging introduction to capture students' attention.	5
Instructional Strategies:	
Variety in instructional methods (e.g., lecture, group work, discussions).	4
Application of pre-during-post reading strategies.	4
Student Engagement:	
Active participation of students.	5
Monitoring and encouragement of student contributions.	5
Use of questioning techniques to stimulate critical thinking.	5
Differentiation:	
Adaptation of teaching methods to address diverse learning styles.	4
Provision for students requiring additional support.	4
Technology Integration:	
Use of Digital Tools:	5
Integration of digital tools (e.g., Google Forms, GoConqr, Educaplay).	5
Effectiveness in utilizing technology to enhance learning.	5
Student Interaction with Technology:	
Student engagement with technology tools.	5
Evidence of students utilizing digital resources for learning.	5
Assessment and Feedback:	
Assessment Strategies:	

Suggestions:

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Ss felt excited to develop group work using Google Forms. - Ss were enthusiastic using digital apps with production settings.	- Some ss grappled to get the Kahoot app. - Some ss needed help in writing their report.

Signature: _____



ANNEX 5

EFL EDUCATOR SURVEY

Survey on Blended Learning Approach vs Traditional Teaching Methods

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is valuable in understanding the perspectives of educators on Blended Learning and Traditional Teaching methods. Please answer the following questions based on your experiences and preferences.

Demographic Information:

1. Name (Optional):
2. Educational Institution:
3. Teaching Experience (Years):
4. Grade/Subject Taught:

On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall learning experience in this class? (1 being low, 5 being high)

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
How would you describe your overall experience with traditional teaching methods?					
How would you describe your overall experience with blended learning methods?					

What factors influence your preference for a particular teaching method?

- Student engagement
- Learning outcomes and effectiveness
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Technological resources and support
- Classroom management
- Alignment with curriculum and learning objectives
- Personal teaching style
- Student feedback
- Accessibility for diverse learners

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

In your opinion, what are the main advantages of traditional teaching methods? (Select up to 3)

- Clear teacher-student interaction
- Classroom management
- Direct and immediate feedback
- Structured lesson plans
- Other (Please specify): _____

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

In your opinion, what are the main advantages of blended learning methods? (Select up to 3)

- Enhanced student engagement
- Flexibility in learning styles
- Access to a variety of resources
- Individualised learning paths

☐
☐
☐
☐

- Other (Please specify): _____

Have you ever incorporated blended learning elements into your teaching?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

If yes, what types of blended learning activities have you used? (Select all that apply)

- Online discussions ☐
- Video lectures ☐
- Interactive quizzes ☐
- Virtual simulations ☐
- Other (Please specify): _____ ☐

Which of the following challenges have you encountered when implementing blended learning in your classroom?

- Technical issues and IT support ☐
- Student engagement and participation ☐
- Integration with the existing curriculum ☐
- Training and professional development for educators ☐
- Assessment and grading methods ☐
- Limited access to technology for students ☐
- Balancing the online and in-person components ☐

In your experience, how does student engagement differ between traditional and blended learning methods?

- Students are more engaged in traditional methods ☐
- Students are more engaged in blended learning methods ☐
- No significant difference ☐
- Other (Please specify): _____

Do you believe blended learning positively impacts students' learning outcomes?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Not sure ☐

How do you measure the success of student learning in your classroom? (Select all that apply)

- Standardized test scores ☐
- Classroom assessments ☐
- Student feedback ☐
- Portfolio assessments ☐
- Other (Please specify): _____

On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall learning experience in this class? (1 being low, 5 being high). Which digital tools or platforms used in the classroom do you find most helpful?

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Google Forms					
Educaplay					
GoConqr					
Whatsapp					
Qr code					
Mentimeter					
Moodle					
Others					

Which others? _____

Which teaching method do you prefer overall?

- Traditional Teaching ☐
- Blended Learning ☐
- Both, depending on the context ☐
- No preference ☐

Do you see the integration of technology in education as a long-term trend?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Not sure ☐

Thank you for completing the survey. Your input is valuable for understanding the perspectives of educators in the ever-evolving landscape of teaching methods.

ANNEX 6

PERCEPTION SURVEY

Student Survey on Classroom Experience and Technology Integration

Instructions: Please provide honest and thoughtful responses to the following questions. Your feedback is valuable in enhancing the learning experience in the classroom.

On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall learning experience in this class? (1 being strongly disagree, 5 being strongly agree)

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
I felt comfortable communicating my ideas using technology in the learning process.					
I felt comfortable interacting with my classmates.					
I felt like we worked as a team when using digital tools.					
I felt comfortable disagreeing with other classmates while maintaining a sense of trust.					
Online discussions help me to develop a sense of collaboration.					
Learning activities helped me ask new questions about the content.					
I used a variety of information sources using different digital tools.					
Combining new information helped me answer questions raised in communicative activities.					
I could apply the knowledge to complete my task in class or other non-class activities.					
I felt motivated to explore content-related questions.					
The instructions for the use of digital tools were clear.					
The sequences of the communicative activities employed digital tools, facilitating my learning improvement.					
The instructor encouraged me to participate actively in online discussions on relevant issues in a way that helped me to learn.					
The instructor provided feedback that helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses relative to the course's goals and objectives.					
The instructor provided feedback in a timely fashion.					

Which digital tools or platforms used in the classroom do you find most helpful?

- Google Forms ☐
- GoConqr ☐
- Educaplay ☐
- WhatsApp ☐
- Qr code ☐
- Mentimeter ☐
- Moodle ☐
- Quizizz ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

Are there any challenges or issues you face when using technology in the classroom?

- Yes ☐
No ☐

What specific language skills do you most enjoy practising and improving?

- Speaking ☐
- Reading ☐
- Listening ☐
- Writing ☐
- Grammar ☐
- Vocabulary ☐

Which teaching method or activity do you find most engaging and why?

- Lectures ☐
- Group activities ☐
- Discussions ☐
- Games ☐
- Quizzes ☐
- Exams ☐
- Presentations ☐
- Other (please specify) _____

Do you feel that the variety of teaching methods used in class caters to different learning styles? Why or why not?

- ☐ Yes, the variety of teaching methods effectively caters to different learning styles.
- ☐ No, the variety of teaching methods does not effectively cater to different learning styles.
- ☐ Partially, some teaching methods address different learning styles, while others do not.
- ☐ Not sure or not applicable.

Is there anything specific you would like to suggest or improve regarding the classroom environment, technology use, or teaching methods?

- ☐ Yes, I have specific suggestions for improving the classroom environment.
- ☐ Yes, I have specific suggestions for enhancing technology use in the classroom.
- ☐ Yes, I have specific suggestions for refining teaching methods.
- ☐ No, I am satisfied with the current classroom environment, technology use, and teaching methods.
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Would you prefer more or less integration of technology in your learning experience?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Perception Survey results: Graph data

Social presence

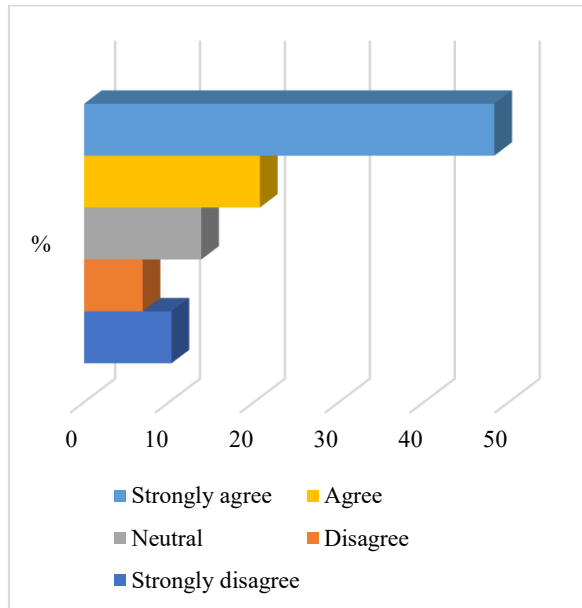


Figure 42 SP1 Feeling comfortable communicating my ideas when using Technology.

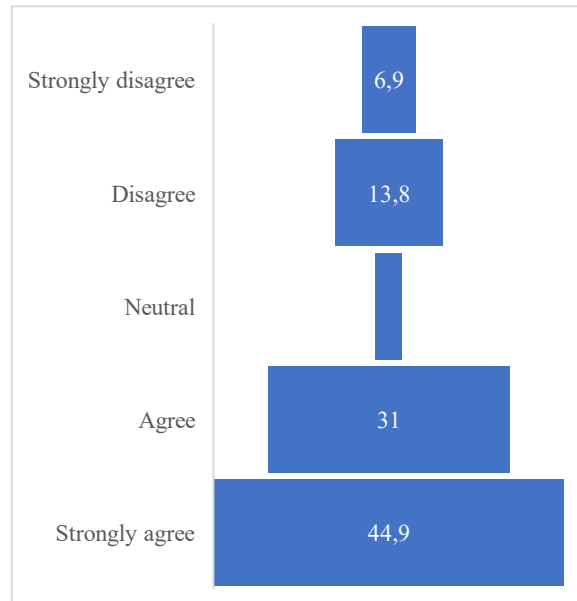


Figure 43 SP2 Feeling comfortable interacting with my classmates.

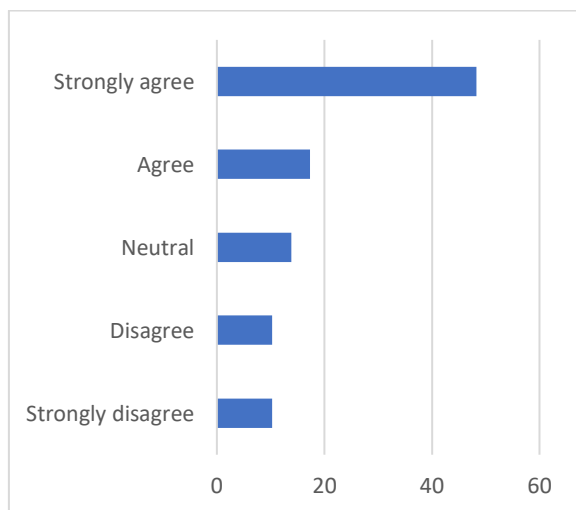


Figure 44 SP3 Feeling comfortable with teamwork using digital tools.

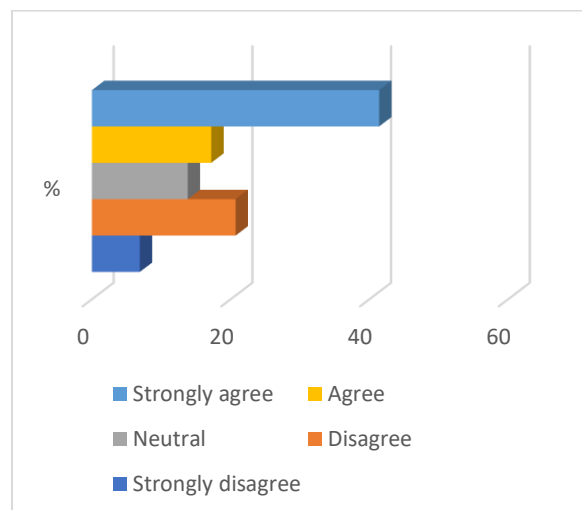


Figure 45 SP4 Feeling comfortable disagreeing with other classmates while maintaining a sense of trust.

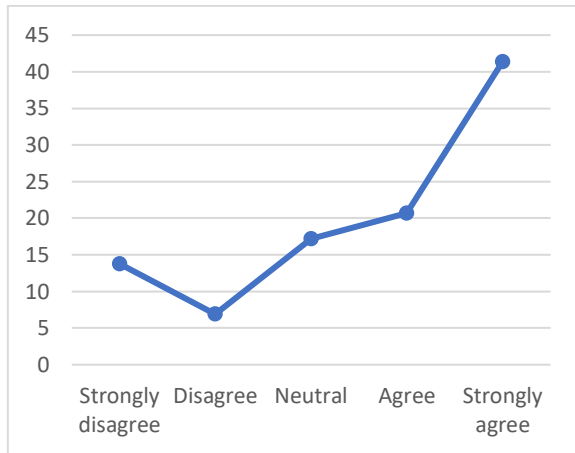


Figure 46 SP5 Online discussions help me to develop a sense of collaboration.

Cognitive Presence

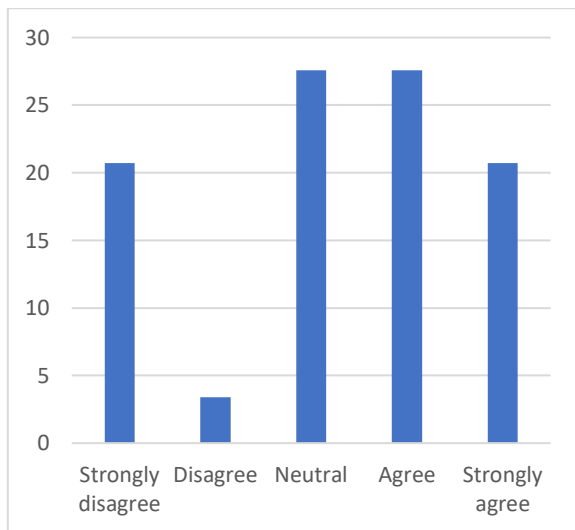


Figure 47 CP1 Learning activities helped me ask new questions about the content.

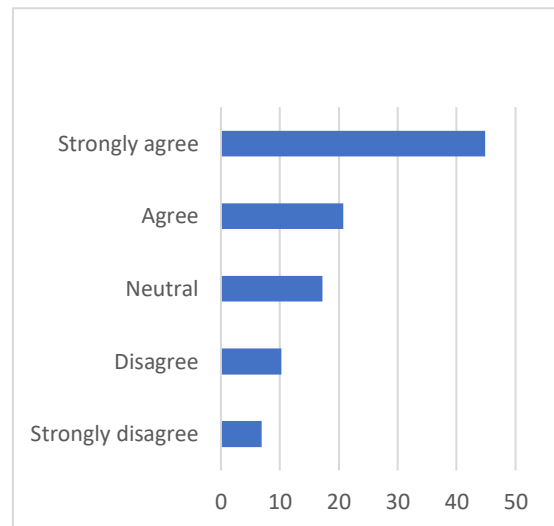


Figure 48 CP2 Application of a variety of information sources using different digital tools.

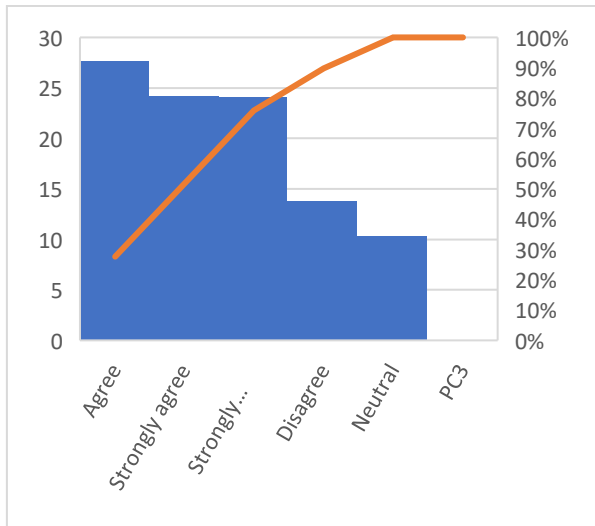


Figure 49 CP3 Combining new information helped me answer questions raised in communicative activities.

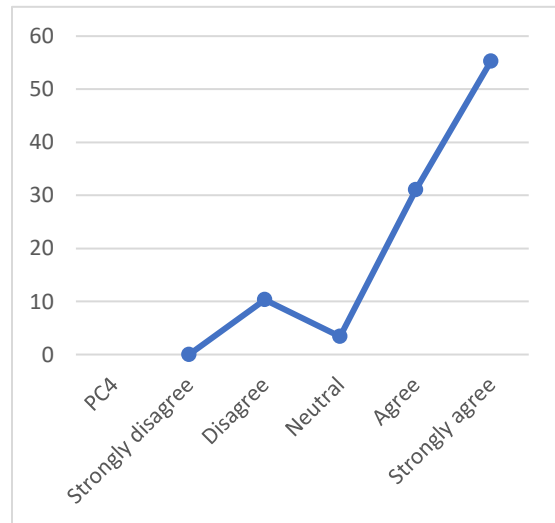


Figure 50 CP4 Applying the knowledge to complete my task in class or other non-class activities.

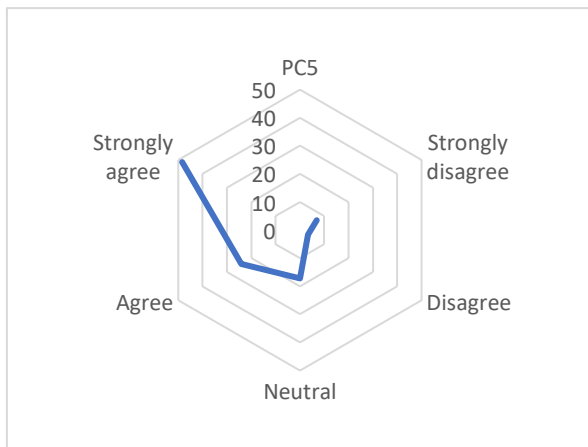


Figure 51 CP5 Feeling motivated to explore content-related questions.

Teaching presence

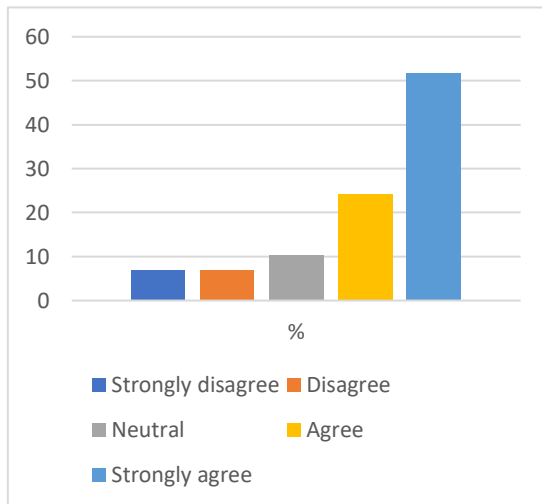


Figure 52 TP1 The instructions for the use of digital tools were clear.

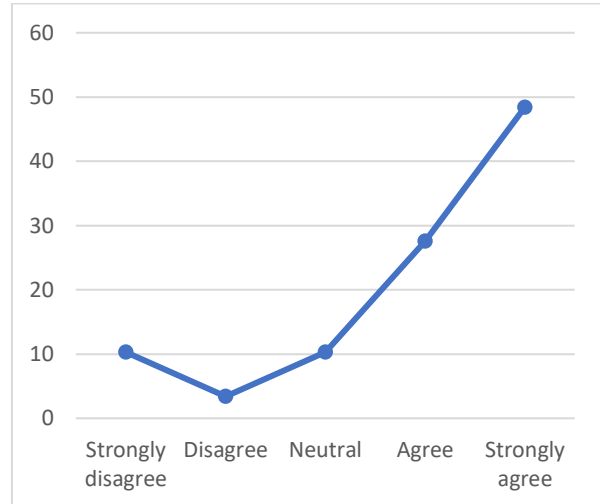


Figure 53 TP2 The sequences of the communicative activities employed digital tools, facilitating my learning improvement.

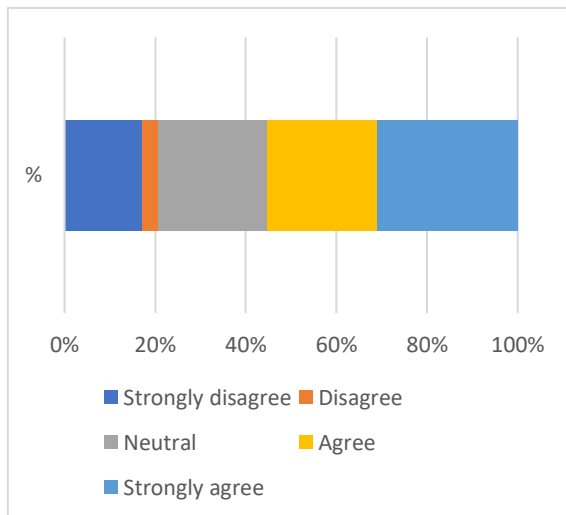


Figure 54 TP3 The instructions for the use of digital tools were clear.

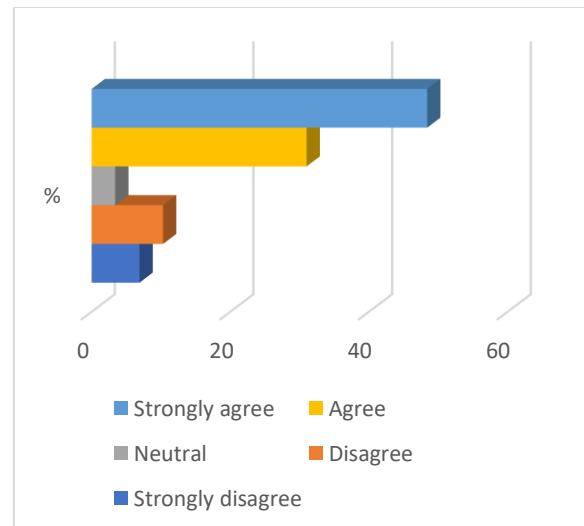


Figure 55 TP4 The instructor provided feedback that helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses relative to the course's goals and objectives.

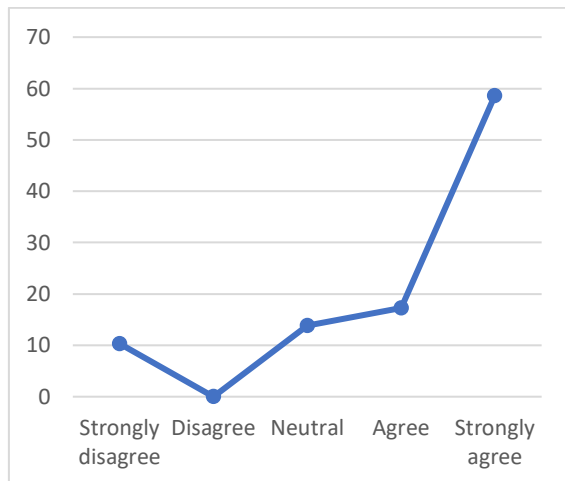


Figure 56 TP4 The instructor provided feedback in a timely fashion.

ANNEX 7 BLENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Class Learning Activities



Figure 57 Interview of a university student about his lifestyle.



Figure 58 Reporting the findings of the survey.



Figure 59 Gathering data from an interview about a team project.

☐ Registrar cdahikth@utb.edu.ec como el correo que se incluirá al enviar mi respuesta

 Puntuaciones Publicar puntuaciones		
Correo electrónico	Puntuación / 12	Publicación de la puntuación
nmurillo@fcjse.utb.edu.ec	7	Sin publicar
mileneramerizalde25@gmail.com	7	Sin publicar
juniormoncayo420@gmail.com	2	Sin publicar
ypacheco818@fcjse.utb.edu.ec	6	Sin publicar
brittanygomezdelatorre012@gmail.com	11	Sin publicar
jackarmijos16@gmail.com	4	Sin publicar
baldazc@fcjse.utb.edu.ec	11	Sin publicar



Reading comprehension activity shown from the SmartScreen whiteboard.

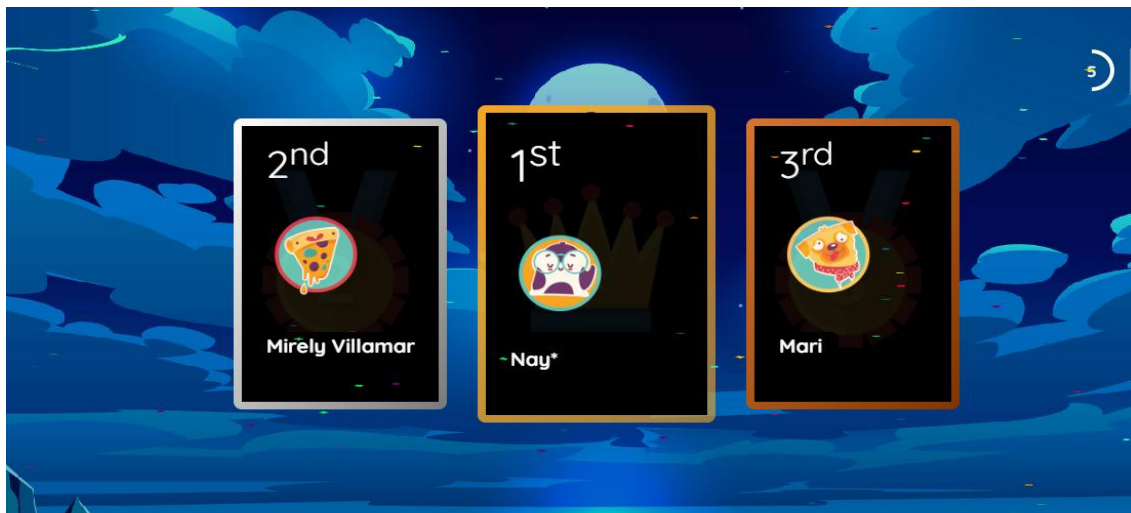


Figure 62 Assessing experimental group knowledge using the Quizizz app in class.



Figure 63 Raking of experimental group knowledge using the Quizizz app in class.

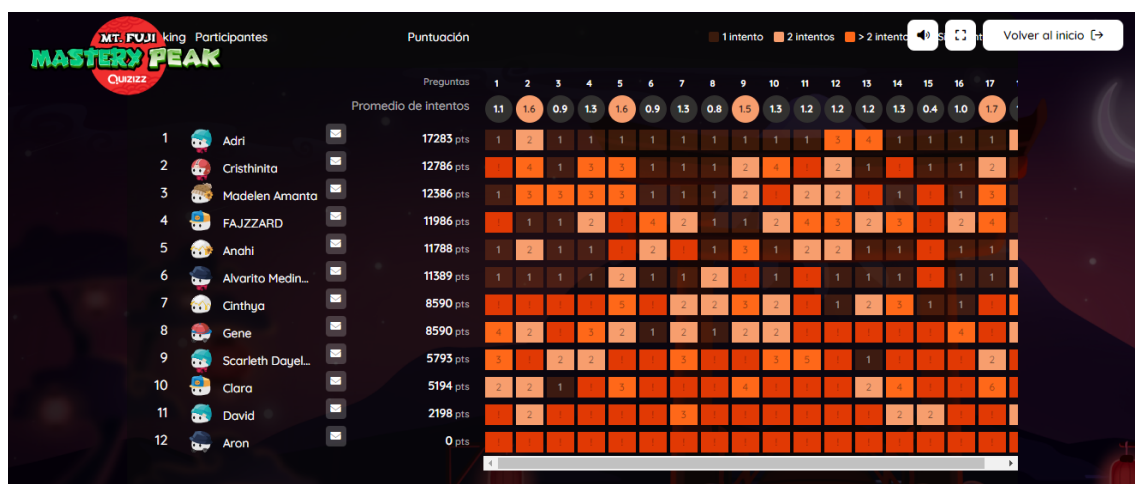


Figure 64 Raking of experimental group knowledge using the Quizizz app in class.



Figure 65 Practising listening comprehension activity using the Educaplay app.

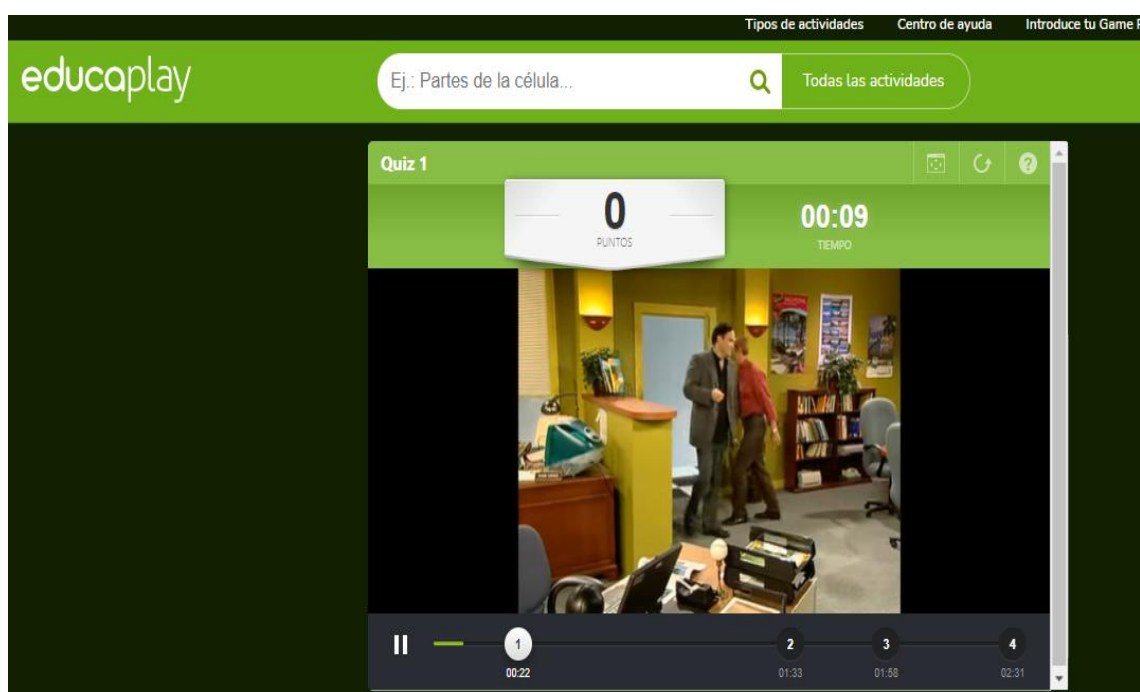


Figure 66 Practising listening comprehension activity using the Educaplay app.

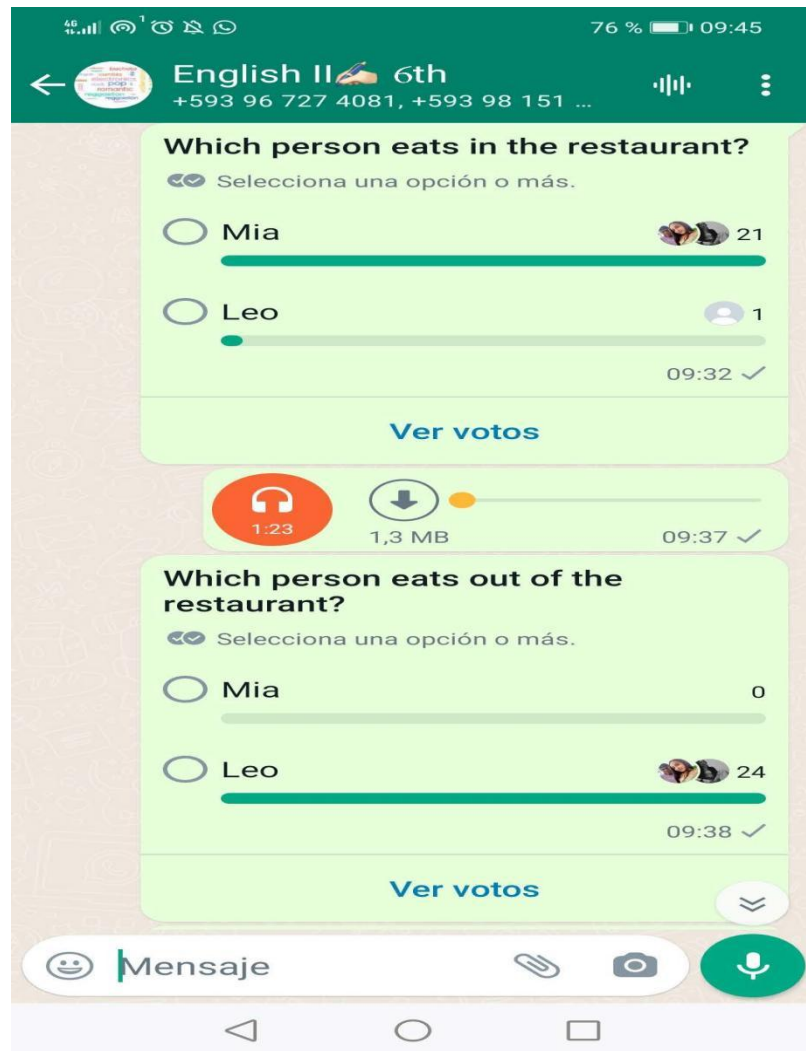


Figure 67 Listening activity using a survey through the WhatsApp tool.

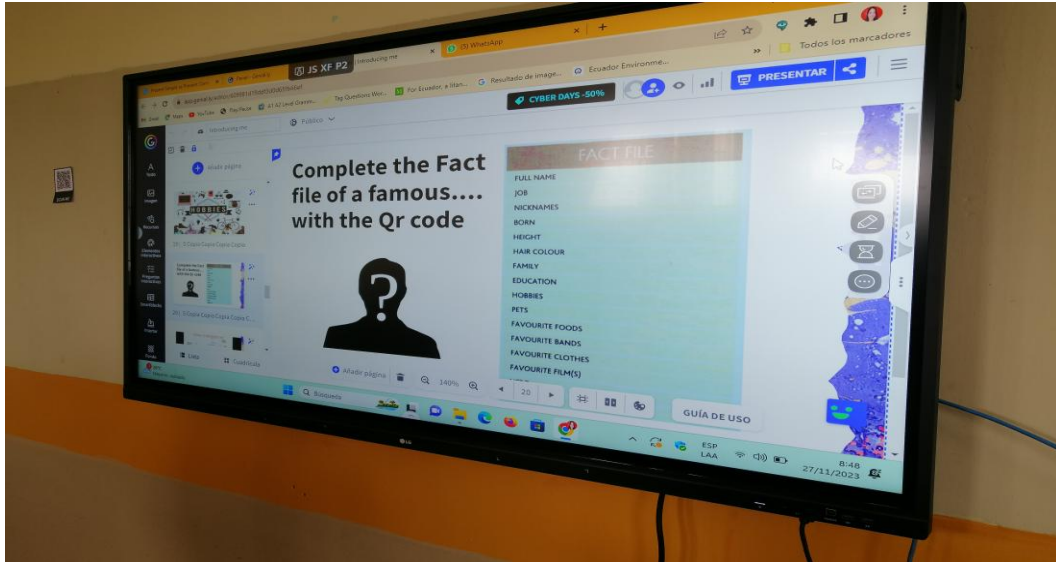


Figure 68 Writing activity in class using the QR codes tool.



Figure 69 Writing activity in class using the QR codes tool.

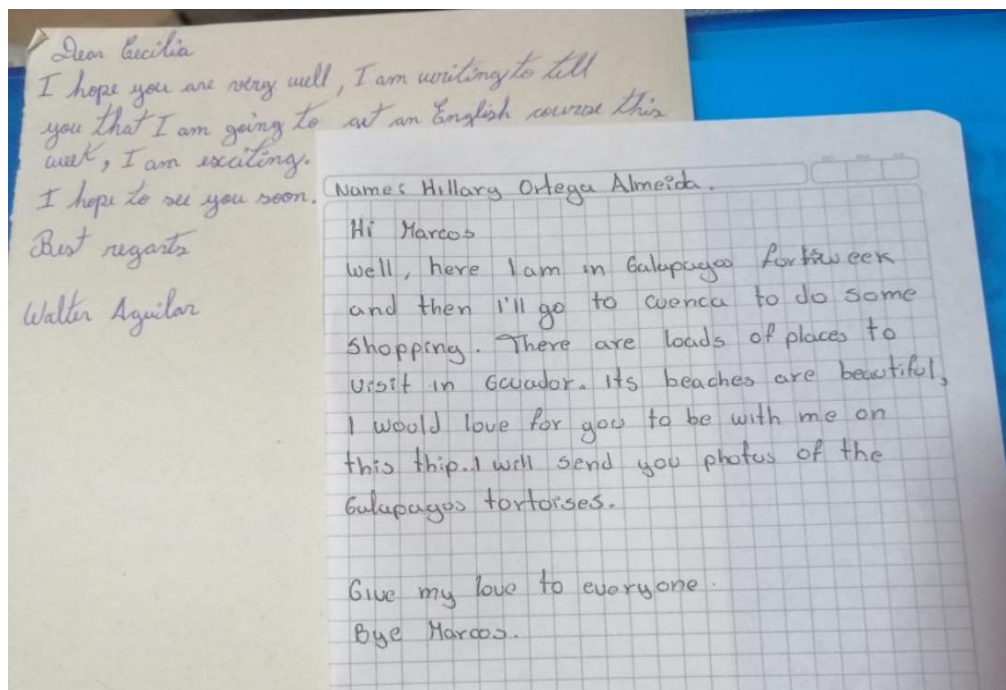
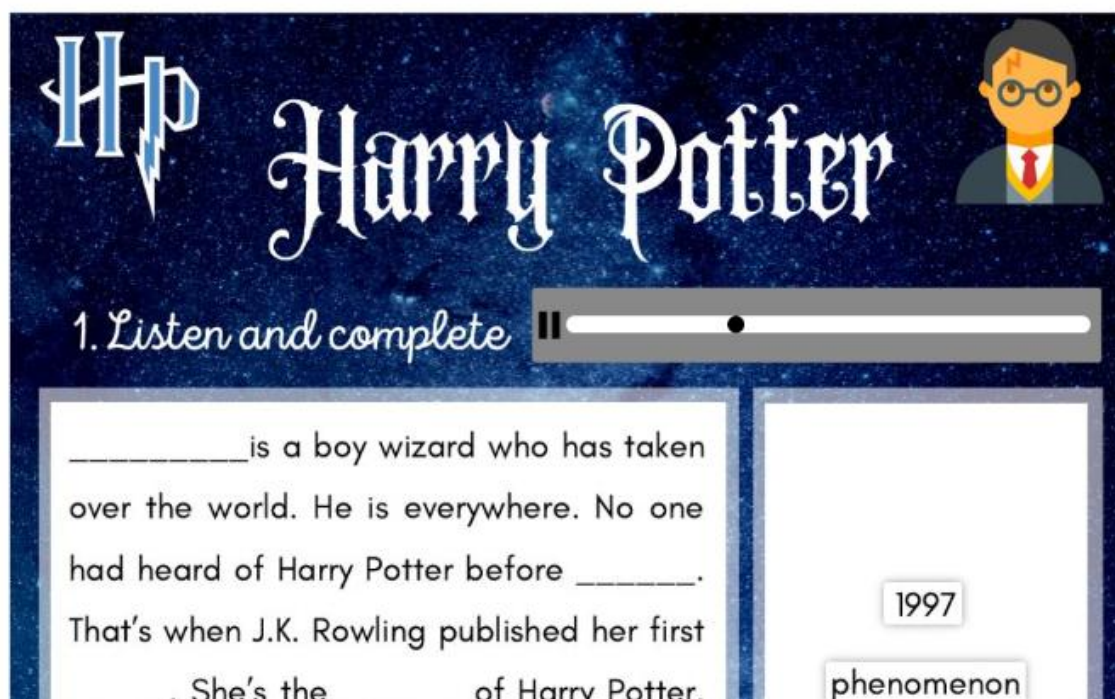


Figure 70 Writing activity done in class.

Listening time...!..1



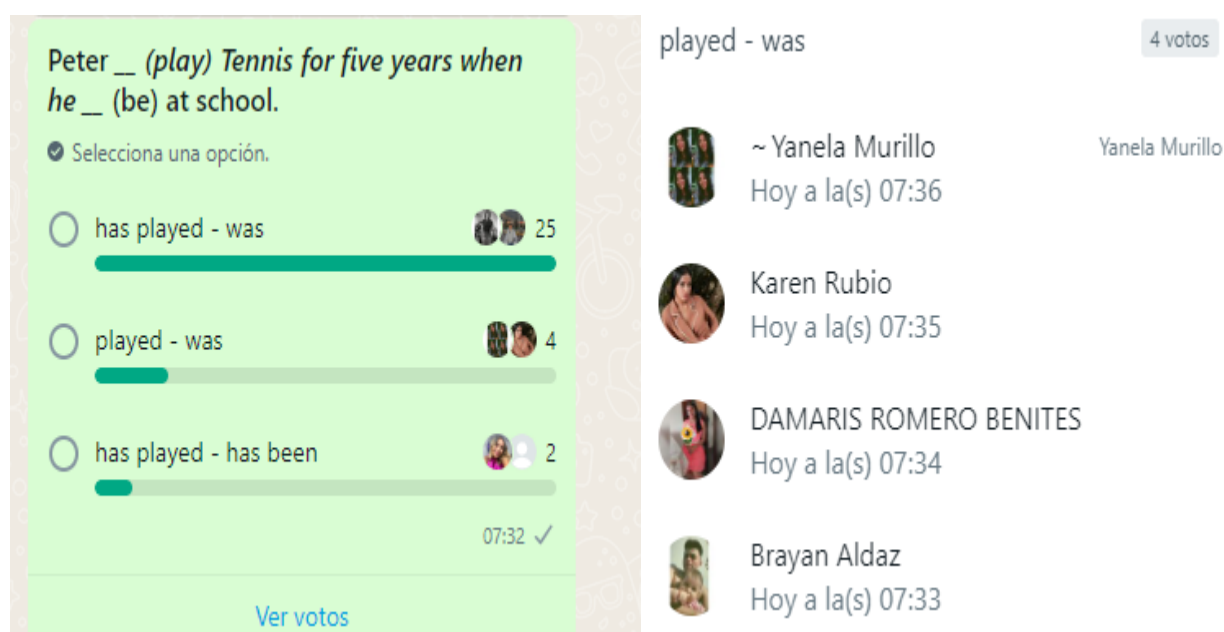
The interface features a dark blue background with a starry pattern. On the left is the 'Hp' logo, and on the right is a cartoon illustration of a man with glasses and a tie. The title 'Harry Potter' is written in a large, white, gothic-style font. Below the title, the instruction '1. Listen and complete' is displayed. A progress bar with a play button icon is positioned above a text box. The text box contains a listening comprehension exercise with blanks and a dropdown menu.

1. Listen and complete

_____ is a boy wizard who has taken over the world. He is everywhere. No one had heard of Harry Potter before _____. That's when J.K. Rowling published her first _____. She's the _____ of Harry Potter.

1997
phenomenon

Figure 71 Practising listening and reading comprehension in the Liveworksheet e-platform.



The interface shows a WhatsApp chat window with a survey. The survey question is 'Peter __ (play) Tennis for five years when he __ (be) at school.' Below the question are three options: 'has played - was' (25 votes), 'played - was' (4 votes), and 'has played - has been' (2 votes). A 'Ver votos' button is at the bottom. To the right, a list of users who voted is shown, including Yanela Murillo, Karen Rubio, DAMARIS ROMERO BENITES, and Brayan Aldaz, each with their vote time.

Peter __ (play) Tennis for five years when he __ (be) at school.

Selecciona una opción.

☐ has played - was 25

☐ played - was 4

☐ has played - has been 2

07:32 ✓

Ver votos

played - was 4 votos

~ Yanela Murillo Yanela Murillo
Hoy a la(s) 07:36

Karen Rubio
Hoy a la(s) 07:35

DAMARIS ROMERO BENITES
Hoy a la(s) 07:34

Brayan Aldaz
Hoy a la(s) 07:33

Figure 72 Using Surveys on WhatsApp to assess grammar understandings.



Figure 73 Practical exercise to reinforce vocabulary using the Kahoot tool.

Online class

Future: will, be going to, present progressive

1. Tony is meeting a friend tomorrow.(meet)
2. I think it will snow soon.(snow)
3. Perhaps I will visit New York one day.(visit)
4. What time are you leaving/are you going to leave tomorrow? (leave/you)
5. Who will win the next World Cup? (win)
6. I'm not sure you will fail/are going to fail the exam next week. (not fail)
7. I am going to visit my parents at the weekend. (visit)
8. Don't touch that dog. It will bite you. (bite)
9. They are coming for a meal tonight.(come)
10. Look at those clouds, it is going to rain .(rain)

<https://www.tolearnenglish.com/exercises/exercise-english-2/exercise-english-6874.php>
[https://es.liveworksheets.com/worksheets/en/English_as_a_Second_Language_\(ESL\)/Will_vs_going_to/Be_Going_to_vs_Will_-_1_an26759vt](https://es.liveworksheets.com/worksheets/en/English_as_a_Second_Language_(ESL)/Will_vs_going_to/Be_Going_to_vs_Will_-_1_an26759vt)

Figure 74 Evidence of online class of the experimental group for a week.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS 1: NOW and THEN.

Learning Outcomes:

Understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, and so on.

Resources Zone

 [NOW AND THEN](#)

 [Newspapers Vocabulary](#)

 [Question tags](#)

Activities Zone

 [Computing lab.1](#)

 [Grammar and reading activity](#)

 [Computing lab.1](#)

 [Question Tags...1](#)

 [Writing an informal e-mail](#)

 [Role play](#)

 [Vocabulary](#)

Assessment Zone

 [Group work](#)

 [Quick Quiz...1](#)

Figure 75 Evidence of autonomous activities performed in Unit 1 for the experimental group.

The resources attached in the first unit were chosen or designed from English learning sites related to the content given by providing engaging and variety of activities to reach the main goal. As seen in figure 75, learners practised grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking, and their language learning progress was assessed through a quiz from a Moodle tool.

Tag questions...1

Practice Tag questions usage and click on the link below. Then, let me know your score uploading it here.

<https://www.goconqr.com/en/quiz/23338721/Question-tags>

Grading summary

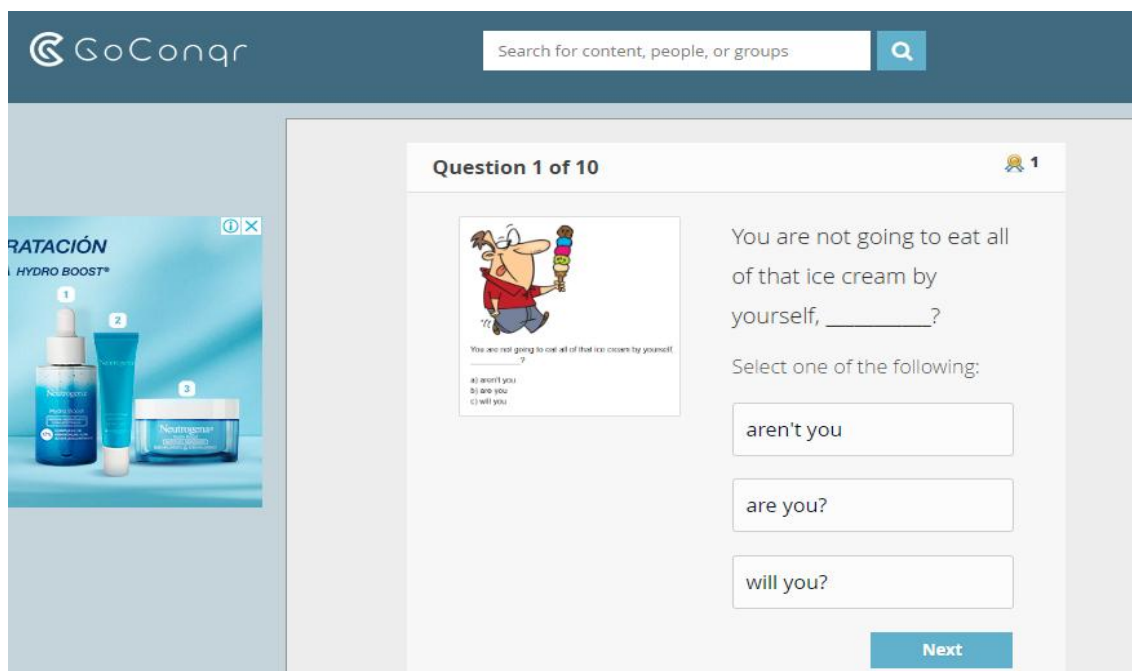


Figure 76 Evidence of autonomous activity performed through the GoConqr app for the experimental group.

Figure 76 shows the application of the GoConqr app to make experimental group practice the primary grammar of unit 1, which was attractive for them because it is learner-friendly, practical, and more enjoyable.



Figure 77 Evidence of autonomous communication activity performed through the Educaplay app for the

experimental group.

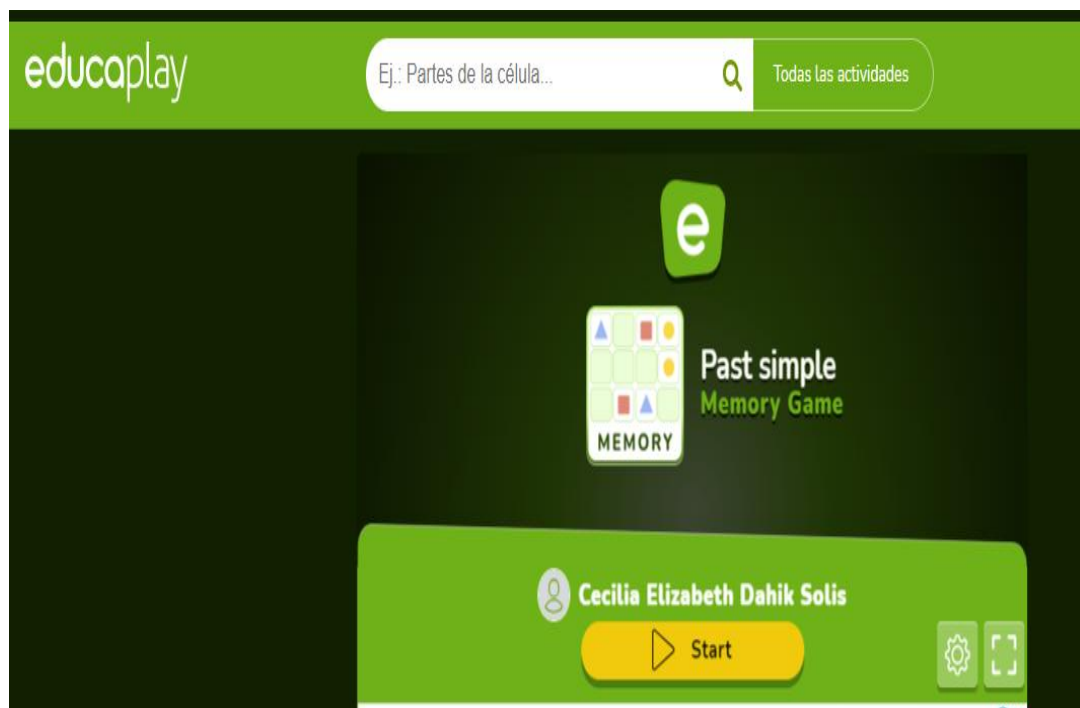


Figure 78 Evidence of autonomous vocabulary activity performed through the Educaplay app for the experimental group.

Similarly, through the Educaplay platform, some interactive learning sources were created to assess grammar and vocabulary items. They tried to complete game activities many times because they failed to do them the first time, which indicated that it was challenging, but in the end, they felt satisfied when they accomplished it with high results.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS 2: WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?

Learning Outcomes:
Describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions.

Resources Zone
 [Unit 2](#)
 [Glossary](#)

Activities Zone
 [Grammar time...1](#)
 [Listening time...1](#)
 [What have you done?...1](#)
 [Computing lab](#)
 [Computing lab](#)
 [Grammar time](#)

Assessment Zone
 [QuickQuiz...1](#)
 [First partial exam...1](#)

Figure 79 Evidence of autonomous activities performed in unit 2 for the experimental and control groups.

In this unit 2, learners were immersed in listening, writing and reading through a grammar activity. Moreover, a quiz was applied to gauge the learner's progress. In addition, they reinforced the whole content defined in the syllabus by practising in the computing lab. A Quiz was applied with listening, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary to measure and trace the learner's language acquisition during the first partial average.

Reading time...1

Practice reading and click on the link below. Then, let me know your score uploading it here.

<https://www.goconqr.com/en/quiz/22199599/Reading-Time--Humans-crave-news>

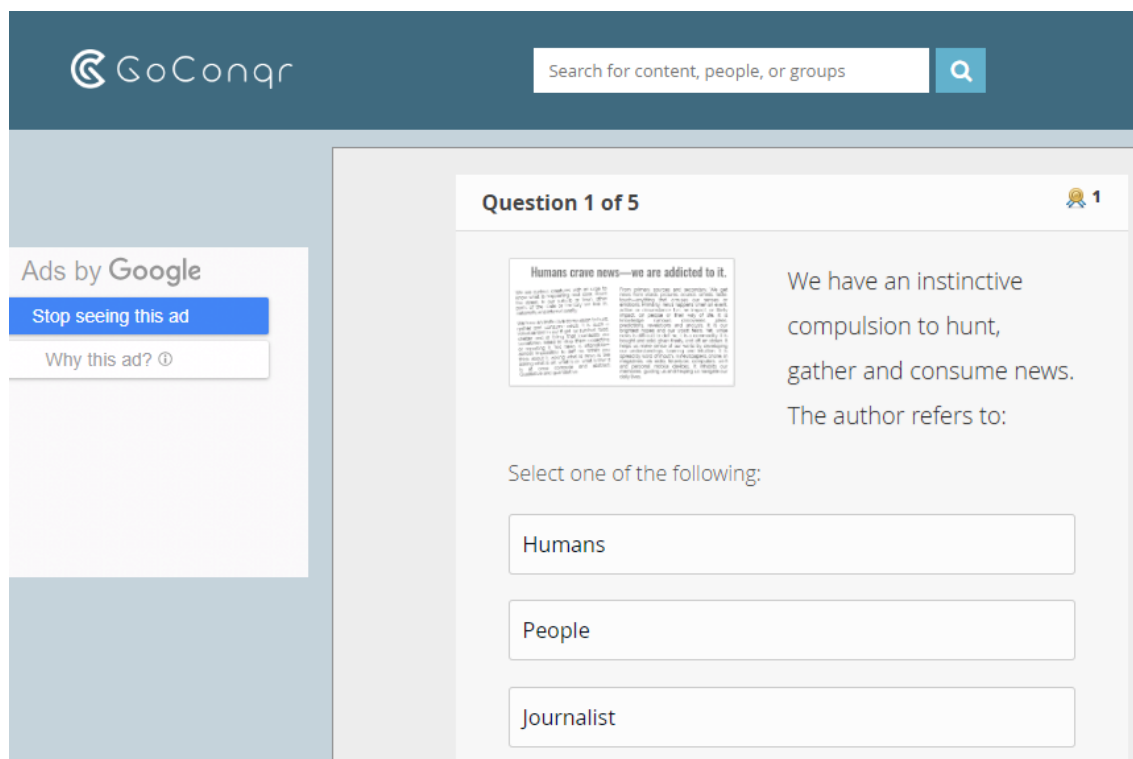


Figure 80 Evidence of autonomous reading activity performed through the GoConqr app for the experimental group.

Note: This reading activity was created to enhance the learner's lexicon for better understanding.

Writing: Simon's story....2

Write the story of Simon Roland using the pictures below.

Group A



Simon Roland / ten years old / one day play on the beach near home / young man jump into water



a few minutes later / hear shouts / the young man drown / Simon decide to help



Simon swim
100 m / reach young man / young



later / young man recover /

Discussion

- ☆ [Simon's Brave Beach Rescue](#)
- ☆ [Simon's Story](#)
- ☆ [Simon's Story](#)
- ☆ [SIMON'S BRAVE RESCUE](#)
- ☆ [Simon saves life on the beach](#)
- ☆ [One day in the beach](#)
- ☆ [Brave action of a child saves a young man on the beach](#)
- ☆ [life, sun, sea and sand](#)
- ☆ [Grupo : Gabriela Vincés , Malany Bravo Lorena Plazarte](#)
- ☆ [Grupo: Lorena Plazarte Melany Bravo, Gabriela Vincés](#)
- ☆ [Grupo\(Gabriela Vincés ,Judith Bravo y Lorena Plazarte](#)
- ☆ [Simón the Savior](#)

Figure 81 Evidence of autonomous writing activity performed through the Moodle platform for the experimental group.

Note: In this writing task, experimental group narrated Simon’s real story by registering their responses through a forum in the Moodle platform meanwhile, control group wrote it down in a sheet.

Tutoring class

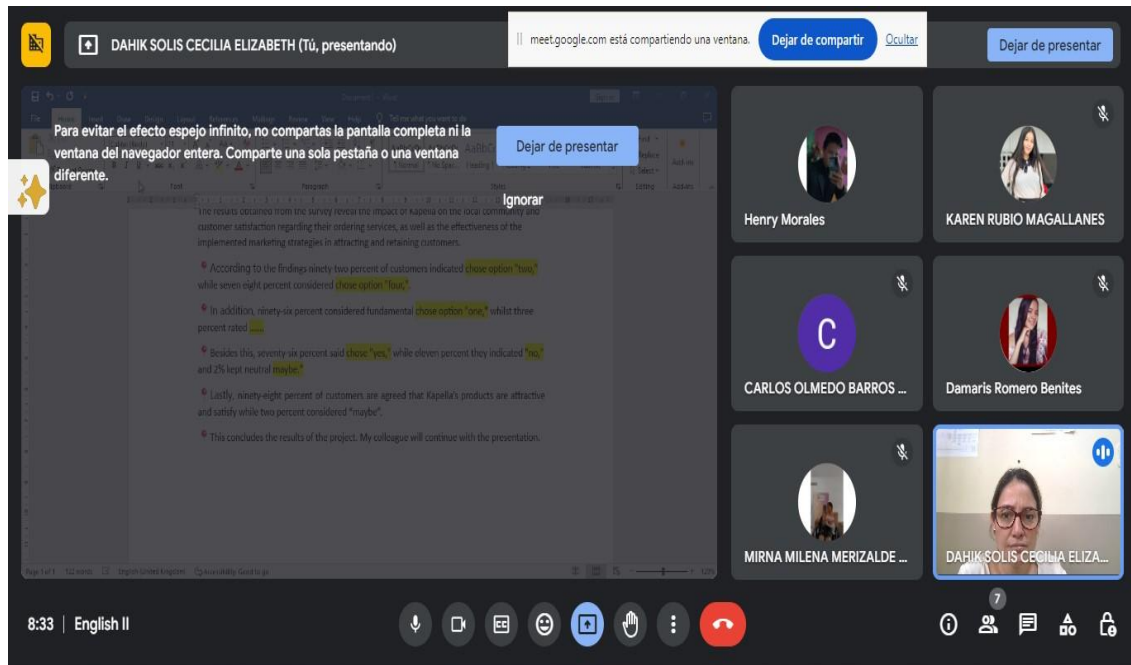


Figure 82 Evidence of tutoring online class for the experimental group.

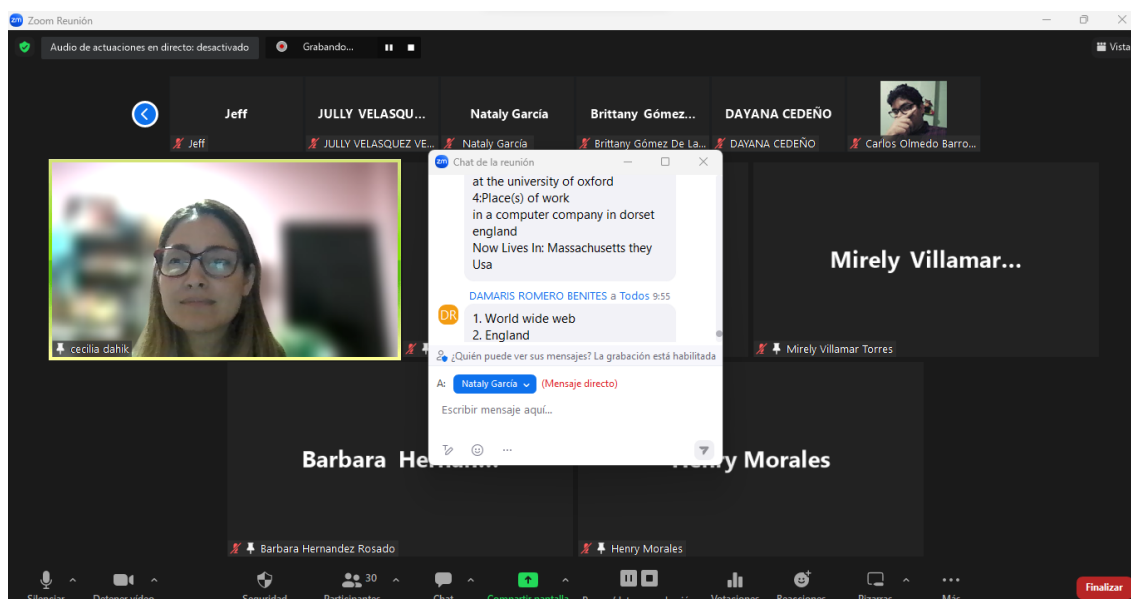


Figure 83 Evidence of tutoring online class for the experimental group.



Figure 84 Evidence of tutoring face-to-face class for the experimental group.

Computing lab

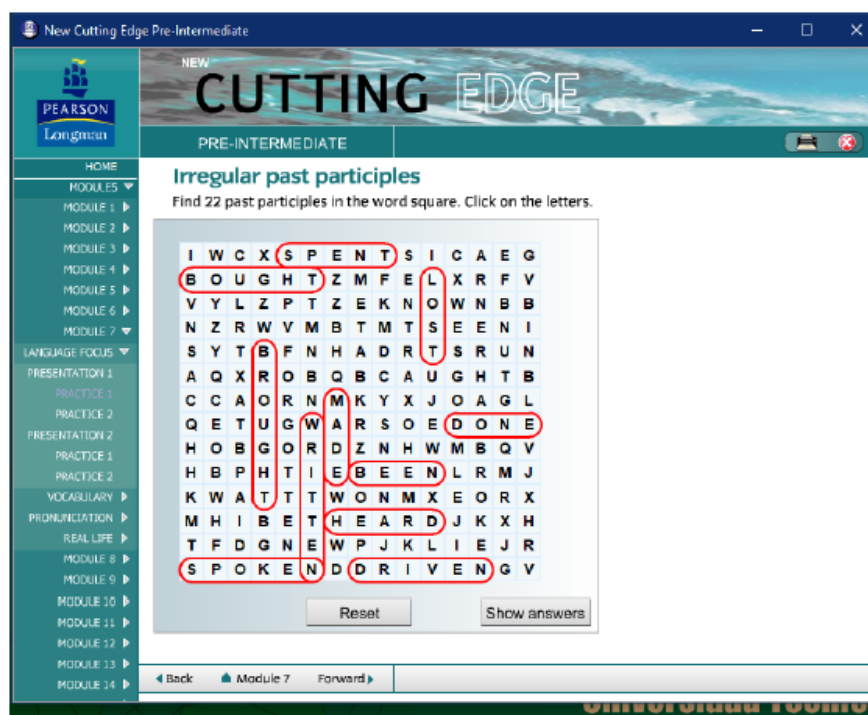


Figure 85 Evidence of computing lab vocabulary activity performed through the New cutting-edge

platform for experimental and control groups.

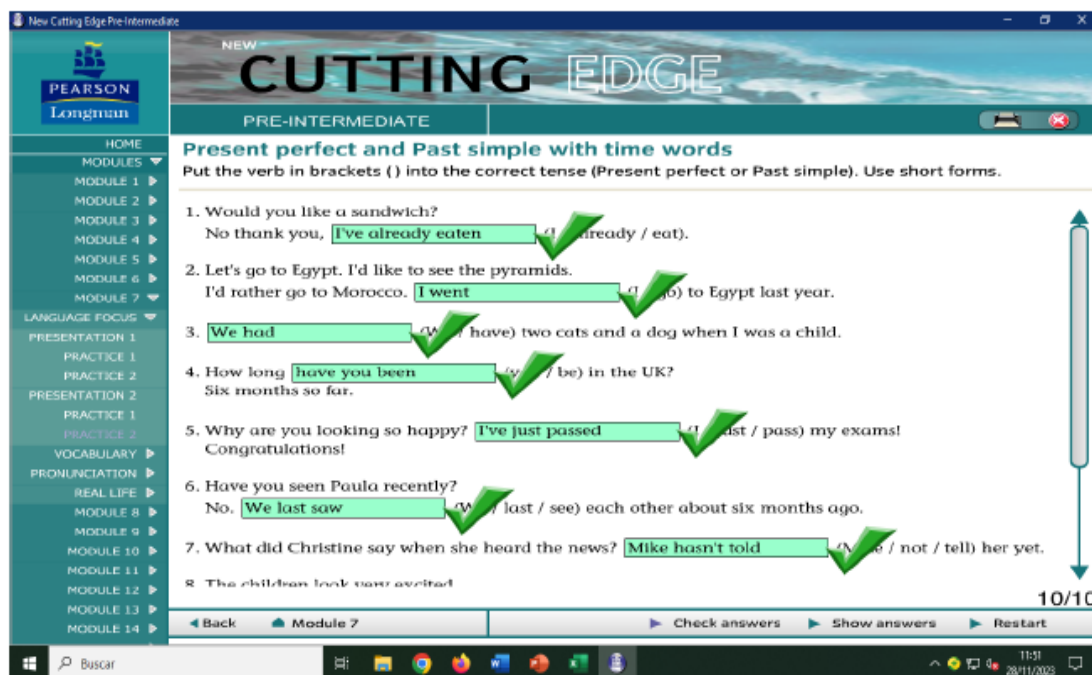


Figure 86 Evidence of computing lab grammar activity performed through the New cutting-edge platform for experimental and control groups.

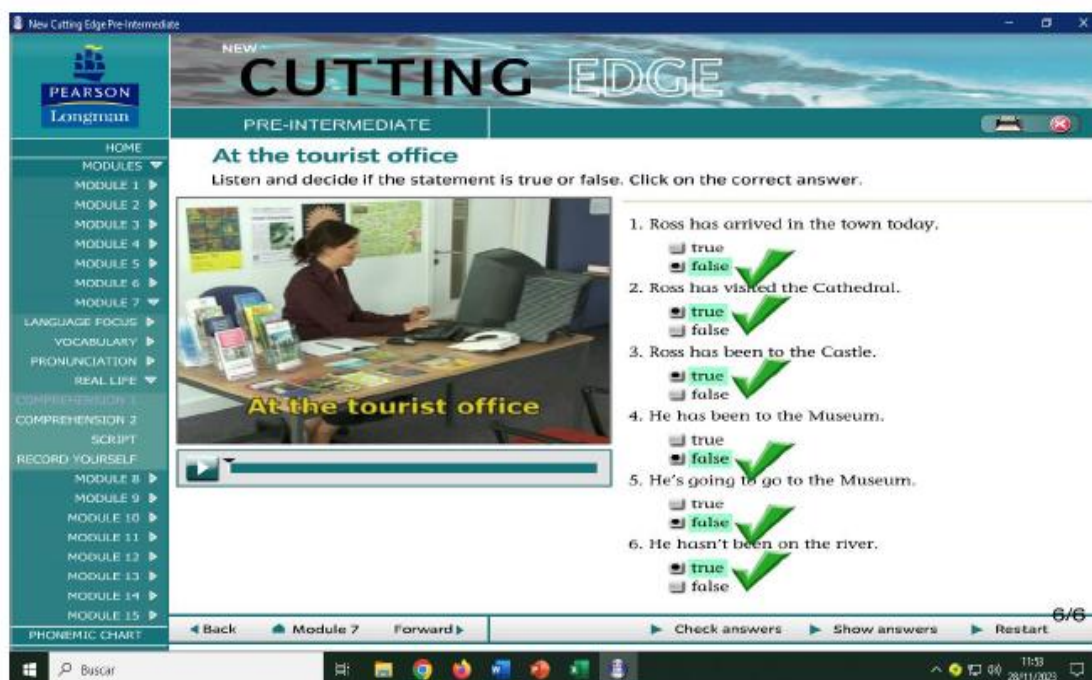


Figure 87 Evidence of computing lab listening activity performed through the New cutting-edge platform for the experimental and control groups.

ANNEX 8

RESEARCH PLANNING SHEET

Blended learning in higher education to enhance learners English Language skills

No	Reserach Tasks	5 of june- 5 of july				6 of july- 5 of august				6 of agust -5 of september			
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
1	Research Methodology												
2	Population and Sample												
3	Proposal research design (application)												
4	Learners data collection												
5	Survey design												
6	Application learners survey												
7	Application professors survey												
8	Statistical analysis report												
9	Data analysis methodology												
10	Final report												

GRADE REPORT OF ASSESSED EXPERIMENTAL GROUP WITH BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH

Student's List	2	0,25	1	1	1	1	0,25	1,5	2	10
	P.C	Portfolio	Grammar & Vocabulary	Reading & Listening	Writing	Quizzes	Computing lab	Oral exam	Written exam	Total
Student 1	2	0.25	1	1	1	0.80	0.25	1.45	2	9.75
Student 2	2	0.25	0.75	0.85	0.75	0.8	0.25	1.3	1.9	8.85
Student 3	2	0.25	0.98	0.88	1	0.9	0.25	1.5	1.7	9.45
Student 4	1.8	0.25	0.98	1	1	0.8	0.25	1.1	2	9.18
Student 5	1.75	0.25	0.73	1	1	0.7	0.25	1.3	1.75	8.73
Student 6	1.6	0.25	0.5	0.75	1	0.8	0.25	1.4	1.65	8.20
Student 7	1.7	0.25	0.98	1	1	0.9	0.25	1.3	1.7	9.08
Student 8	1.7	0.25	0.99	1	0.75	0.7	0.25	1.45	2	9.09
Student 9	1.8	0.25	1	1	1	0.9	0.25	1.5	1.7	9.40
Student 10	1.7	0.25	0.5	0.75	0.75	0.8	0.25	1.4	1.8	8.20
Student 11	1.8	0.25	1	0.75	1	1	0.25	1.2	1.75	9.00
Student 12	2	0.25	1	1	1	0.6	0.25	1.4	2	9.50
Student 13	2	0.25	0.94	1	0.75	1	0.25	1.4	1.3	8.89
Student 14	2	0.25	0.4	0.75	1.75	0.7	0.25	1.4	1.5	9.00
Student 15	2	0.25	0.98	1	1	1	0.25	1.25	1.55	9.28
Student 16	1.7	0.25	1	1	1	1	0.25	1.4	1.8	9.40
Student 17	2	0.25	0.75	1	1	1	0.25	1.4	1.75	9.40
Student 18	1.7	0.25	1	0.88	1	1	0.25	1.45	1.6	9.13
Student 19	1.7	0.25	1	1	1	0.9	0.25	1.3	1.75	9.15
Student 20	2	0.25	1	1	1	0.7	0.25	1.4	1.5	9.10
Student 21	1.8	0.25	1	1	1	0.75	0.25	1.3	1.65	9.00
Student 22	1.7	0.25	1	0.95	1	0.8	0.25	1.4	1.7	9.05
Student 23	2	0.25	0.75	1	1	1	0.25	1.4	1.75	9.40
Student 24	2	0.25	1	1	1	1	0.25	1.5	2	10.00
Student 25	2	0.25	1	1	1	0.7	0.25	1.45	1.75	9.40
Student 26	2	0.25	1	1	1	1	0.25	1.2	1.75	9.45
Student 27	2	0.25	0.74	0.88	1	1	0.25	1.4	1.4	8.91
Student 28	1.7	0.25	1	1	1	1	0.25	1.25	1.7	9.15
Student 29	2	0.25	1	1	1	1	0.25	1.4	1.45	9.35

GRADE REPORT OF ASSESSED CONTROL GROUP WITH TRADITIONAL METHODS

	2	0,25	1	1	1	1	0,25	1,5	2	10
Student's list	P.C.	Portfolio	Grammar & Vocabulary	Listening & Reading	Writing	Quizzes	Computing lab	Oral exam	Written exam	Total
St 1	1.75	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.75	0.25	1.25	1.29	7.79
St 2	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.25	1.4	1.59	8.24
St 3	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.75	0.25	1.5	1.49	8.49
St 4	1.8	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.25	1.25	1.5	7.8
St 5	1.25	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.25	1	1	6.5
St 6	1.8	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.75	0.25	1.15	1.4	6.85
St 7	1.5	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.25	1.45	1.79	7.99
St 8	1.25	0.25	1	0.75	0.25	0.5	0.25	1.15	1.35	6.5
St 9	1.5	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.65	0.25	1.4	1.48	7.78
St 10	1.25	0.25	0.5	1	0.5	0.65	0.25	1.2	1.77	7.12
St 11	1.25	0.25	1	0.75	0.5	0.78	0.25	1.35	1.39	7.27
St 12	1.25	0.25	1	1	0.25	0.9	0.25	1.35	1.45	7.45
St 13	1.5	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.75	0.25	0.5	1.38	6.88
St 14	1.25	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.68	0.25	1.15	1.39	7.22
St 15	1.5	0.25	0.5	0.75	0.25	0.5	0.25	1.2	1.55	6.5
St 16	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.7	0.25	1.4	1.59	8.44
St 17	1.5	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.55	0.25	1.35	1.77	7.92
St 18	1	0.25	1	0.5	0.25	0	0.25	1,15	1.79	5.94
St 19	1.75	0.25	1	1	0.25	0.6	0.25	1,4	1.29	7.54
St 20	1.5	0.25	0.93	0.75	0	1	0.25	1.35	1.33	7.11
St 21	1.25	0.25	1	1	0.5	1	0.25	1.35	1.58	7.93
St 22	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.4	0.25	1.35	1.16	7.66
St 23	1.8	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.68	0.25	1.4	1.59	8.22
St 24	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.25	1.45	1.38	8.08
St 25	1.5	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.7	0.25	1.1	1.69	7.74
St 26	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.55	0.25	1.45	1.4	8.15
St 27	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	1	0.25	1.45	1.4	8.6
St 28	1.8	0.25	0.98	1	0.5	0.5	0.25	1.35	1.59	7.97
St 29	1.25	0.25	1	1	0.25	0.65	0.25	1.2	1.62	7.22
St 30	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.65	0.25	1.4	1.38	8.18
St 31	2	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.78	0.25	1.35	1.36	8.24
St 32	1.25	0.25	1	1	0.5	1	0.25	1.315	1.39	7.71