



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

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**“UNDERSTANDING VIRTUAL ENGLISH TEACHING
FOR YOUNG LEARNERS: A MULTIMODAL
PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHER EDUCATION”**

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Dedications

With all my affection and heartfelt gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to those who have profoundly impacted my life by helping me achieve my dreams. Your unwavering support and motivation, especially during times of difficulty, have been invaluable.

This work is a tribute to the remarkable individuals who have consistently been there for me, offering their encouragement and assistance whenever I needed it. Now, it is my turn to express my thanks and give back a fraction of the support and love you have generously given me. With deep appreciation and love, I dedicate this thesis to you.

My mom, my sister Eri, and my daughter Nati and my aunt Maru.

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Abstract

Over the last two years, we have been in constant change due to the pandemic. Classes have been shaped according to the circumstances, moving from ‘traditional’ face-to-face classes to online and hybrid models and back to face-to-face classes. This continuous movement creates underexplored scenarios for general English Language Teaching (ELT) and Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). Indeed, teachers face the challenge of arranging online classes, adapting lesson plans to work on platforms, checking the effect and quality of online teaching, and improving for further classes (Chen et al., 2020; Goh & Sanders, 2020; Teras et al., 2020). Within this context, it is essential to understand how teachers deal with the new conditions and challenges that emergent modalities bring about. This research seeks to explore 1) what a virtual class scenario for young learners looks like and 2) what the implications for teacher training are. This qualitative case study analyses a video-recorded lesson via ZOOM where a student-teacher gives a class to 2nd graders in primary school. Following a social semiotics perspective (Zappavigna, 2019; Logi_2021), this paper analyses the multimodal resources in a ZOOM class and how their organization enhances or constrains knowledge-building in a second language. Preliminary results of this in-progress work highlight features of a virtual class, such as connectivity issues, interaction patterns, and online classroom management. The results will give us an idea of what a virtual classroom for preschoolers can look like and think about strategies for teacher training.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Rationale

Over the last two years, the world has experienced unexpected changes and COVID-19 is no exception. The pandemic affected people socially, economically, and especially in education. This situation changed the classroom dynamics because the classes took place in a classroom face-to-face, with teachers and students in the same place. Nowadays, in the COVID-19 pandemic, classes must be changed to online environments. There is an issue that teachers must learn to transform face-to-face classes into online classes. In a virtual class, teachers and students are connected online with communication tools such as laptops, devices, mobile phones, computers, tablets, and pads. In contrast in a face-to-face class, the daily routines and activities were done at the school, the classroom, the playground, and the games were different. To develop this qualitative analysis using multimodal analysis, we will draw on the perspectives of several authors and key concepts related to distance education and multimodal analysis.

Firstly, we will rely on the definition of multimodal analysis provided by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), who maintain that multimodal analysis focuses on studying how different modes of communication, such as verbal language, gesture, image, and sound, create meaning in each text or context. This approach enables us to analyze different elements of the recorded lesson, such as the verbal communication, gestures, facial expressions, and visual aids utilized by the student teacher and students.

In summary, this qualitative analysis using multimodal analysis will draw on the concepts and theories provided by various authors to critically examine a recorded English lesson conducted via Zoom. By integrating these theoretical approaches, we hope to gain an in-depth understanding of the verbal, non-verbal, and interactive aspects of teaching and learning in a distance education environment

1.2 Significance of the study

This paper was created to find the elements that will help teachers to understand a virtual classroom. To raise awareness and understand the dynamics of a virtual classroom that will help teachers in training. Therefore, this study should produce data and outcomes that will help understand the phenomenon and prepare other teachers to implement relevant strategies to deal with similar situations.

1.3 Theoretical context of the research

The thesis explores the transformation of English Language Teaching (ELT) education before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. It examines different educational settings, moving from a traditional brick-and-mortar classroom to virtual and blended classrooms. It then focuses on opportunities and challenges associated with each context in terms of teaching English to children in different settings. There was the period where an instructor walked into an actual classroom and taught physical students. This traditional instruction type, in which learning is supported by textbooks, chalkboards, and accompanying teaching materials, based principally on direct interaction between the teacher and the learners (Clark & Mayer, 2016). It reflects the educational scene before

technology-mediated instruction became widespread practice. But the pandemic changed the face of education (Smith, 2020). Due to this modification, Hodges et al. (2020) So rapidly embraced the Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). The authors refer to this short- term shift from traditional classroom-based teaching to technology-based, remote instruction prompted by unexpected events (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic) as ERT

This thesis also explores Zoom use during a pandemic in the classroom. Zoom went from an educational option to the one tool in the classroom you could not do without, and students perceived it as being revolutionary with the way they connected with their teachers. With schools suspended in traditional classroom settings, Zoom has played a critical role in maintaining educational continuity. Lecturers adapted their lecture plans for an online context and leveraged the functionality of Zoom to deliver lively and engaging lectures. Faculty members were able to use Zoom for distance teaching, to enable real-time lectures as well as resource-sharing and discussions. Zoom, even given the difficulties of shifting to online learning, let educators connect with their students and build class community, making pandemic teaching valuable learning experiences despite uncertainty.

To sum up: the purpose of this research was to investigate technology integration to teaching in modern education context. We want to support the quality and effectiveness of preschool education in the digital age and therefore we explore ways that preservice educators can leverage virtual resources like Zoom.

1.4 Research Setting

The research was carried out at the Faculty of Languages, specifically in the English teacher training program, where students participate in professional practices as part of their academic training. This course is part of the Formative Level and aims to help students bring together what they've learned—knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values—and put it into practice, particularly in real-life language teaching settings like English or French classrooms. It involves 240 hours of independent work and is worth 5 academic credits. To take part, students must have completed at least 70% of their coursework. In this context, student teachers could apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during their career process to real teaching situations in primary schools.

Adapting teaching to the virtual environment presents unique challenges, such as managing student attention and creating an engaging online learning space. At the time of this study, the student teacher was undertaking her professional practice in 202 as part of the requirements to complete her Kardex at the Languages Faculty of BUAP. Examining how the student teacher navigates these challenges and adapts her strategies provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of distance teaching at the elementary level and in English teacher training.

In this context, student teachers must complete 60 hours of teaching practice in basic education schools. The aim of the teaching practicum is to help students develop skills relevant to their future careers, under the guidance of experienced educators. However, due to the exceptional circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the teaching

practices had to be done virtually. This transition to virtual teaching was made using the Zoom platform, which allowed for real-time interaction between the student teacher and second grade students at the elementary school.

Adapting professional practice to the virtual environment presents unique challenges, such as managing student attention and engagement through digital media, as well as creating an inclusive and motivating online learning environment. Studying how the student teacher addresses these challenges and adapts her pedagogical strategies to virtual teaching in the context of an elementary school provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of distance teaching at this educational level and in English teacher training in general.

The participant of this case study conducted her teaching practices with second graders in an urban primary school, in a disadvantaged community with limited resources. This primary school adopted a hybrid model (that in this context was understood as a division of modalities rather than the progressive and smooth transition of English both in a virtual environment and a physical setting), to give children a chance to go back to school and catch up with new knowledge with their English lessons.

1.5 Methodology

This qualitative study explores the teaching practices of an English student-teacher at a public university in central Mexico. As part of her training, she engaged in teaching activities across various educational levels, including working with second-grade students in an urban primary school situated in a disadvantaged community. In response to the expected conclusion of the lockdown in Mexico in 2021, the primary school implemented a hybrid

model to facilitate the return of most children to in-person education, including English lessons.

The English class was split between face-to-face sessions and a virtual classroom conducted via Zoom. In this arrangement, the mentor teacher led the in-person lessons while also guiding and supporting the student teacher in her practice. Beyond teaching, the mentor played an important role by modeling effective strategies, checking that lesson goals were achieved, and offering feedback to help the student teacher grow professionally. At the same time, the student teacher was responsible for the online sessions, usually working with only one to six students out of a class of 40 due to limited access to technology. She provided 30-minute English lessons to seven-year-olds via Zoom and supplied parents with weekly lesson plans and materials to assist in their children's learning.

The data for this study was collected in Autumn 2021. Once into the term, the student-teacher made notes of a Zoom class on his own record chart as part of the training requirements. She also made a teaching plan and materials for his virtual class and looked back with a reflective video analysis on how he had taught. The student-teacher agreed to participate in the research. The names of her students were kept private.

1.6 Objective

This research aims to provide an interface between teacher, material and student in a virtual world, where, by using multi-modality analysis, we hope to address the three aspects. Multimodal analysis means using discourse of varying semiotic resources, such as sound or written words, which carry meaning; images and body language (kinesthetic) also convey

messages. It is also possible through this multimodal analysis to reveal something about the English learning practices in virtual classrooms. Another objective is to observe tendencies of a virtual class in English and its phases, the different semiotic resources used when teaching English to kids.

1.7 Research questions.

The following research questions will lead the development of this research:

- What does a Zoom classroom for teaching children look like?
- What do new teachers struggle with in this context? What constraints does the teacher face within the pandemic virtual classroom?

- What semiotic resources does the teacher use in the Zoom virtual classroom?

- What are the phases of a virtual class on Zoom?

This thesis is structured into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study, explaining its significance and defining key terms relevant to the case study. Chapter two provides a review of the literature and highlights the contributions of other scholars. Chapter three outlines the methodology, which is based on a case study approach. Chapter four presents and interprets the data, while chapter five draws conclusions and reflects on the study's limitations.

While this research offers valuable insights into online English learning for young children, it has some limitations. Since it focused on just one virtual classroom in Mexico, the findings may not represent the experiences of students in other contexts

or age groups. The study concentrated on language, images, and non-verbal communication, without fully considering other factors such as family involvement, socio-economic conditions, or school policies. Technological challenges, including inconsistent internet connections and unequal access to devices, also affected participation and learning. Additionally, although the study acknowledged children's health and emotional well-being, these aspects were not examined in depth. Finally, the research took place shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic, a transitional period that may not reflect long-term patterns in virtual education.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The educational environment has experienced significant changes as a result of the global pandemic. The role and practices of educators have been profoundly re-evaluated as a result of the quick shift to online teaching modes. This chapter investigates early childhood education research, considering the new ways of teaching and learning as a result of the pandemic. It stresses that teachers today must prepare students to be lifelong learners, not too tied to traditional models. In this changing scenario, the center of interest has moved on to the means through which teachers make learning possible. Teachers need to know how best to use language and adjust the support for themselves and the learners in this unique environment.

The chapter investigates emerging trends in virtual classrooms for K-12 students, exploring how new approaches unfold in teachers' work and how they mediate for successful learning. The research seeks to share best practices and opportunities for growth for teacher development in a post-virtual classroom epidemic context in light of the pivoting by teachers and the strategies they have used to develop quality learning.

By examining this literature, this chapter attempts to lay a solid foundation for teacher preparation programs that prepare teachers to address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of the virtual classroom in the post-pandemic world.

2.1 Education in ELT in the pre- and post-pandemic times

The coronavirus disease, known as COVID 19, was first detected in Wuhan, Central China. This virus rapidly crosses the world and changes the lives of billions of people in some cases causing death. In every country, each president, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), declared the coronavirus epidemic a pandemic.

Dhawan (2020) investigated and stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to pave the way for introducing digital learning. According to Sinterna (2020), hygiene and personal habits have changed during the pandemic. Handwashing, wearing face masks, physical distancing, and avoiding mass, concerts, sports events, and assemblies require more detailed inspection to control the transmission of this virus.

According to Liguori and Winkler (2020), the major challenge is that educational institutions were forced to close and look for alternative approaches to teaching and learning to create a space for innovative thinking and solutions. (Bryson and Andres, 2020). Even though the pandemic and this virus have created new opportunities involving methods and resources for language acquisition.

In fact, the pandemic has brought about new ways and opportunities to learn a language. Online language learning platforms have gained popularity as people are spending more time at home and seeking ways to be productive. These offer varied resources for practicing speaking and listening, such as web/telephone classes, virtual environments, language exchange networks, and multimedia.

Furthermore, due to the increase of remote work and the popularity of video conferencing platforms and language exchange sites, language learners can have interactions with language tutors or native speakers all around the world. That allows students to receive feedback from skilled speakers and practice speaking in a real-life environment.

To enhance the effectiveness and dynamic nature of the learning process, a variety of language learning apps and software have also integrated advanced features such as gamification, customized learning paths, and AI-driven feedback systems. All said and done, despite the numerous inconveniences and troubles caused by the epidemic, it also brings about new tools and approaches that facilitate language learning, which were never developed or used before, to make it even more convenient, and easier to apply. This emergency prompted the introduction of two acronyms that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic are Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) and Emergency Remote Learning (ERL) to explain the sudden move from teaching and learning in face-to-face environments to remote teaching and learning for unplanned situations like the closure of schools.

2.1.1 Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT):

Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), as characterized by Hodges et al. (2020), takes place during an emergency situation when remote learning method might be the temporary replacement for face-to-face learning. They distinguish ERT from online learning by emphasizing that it is a response to an emergency rather than a product of a carefully planned instructional design procedure.

2.1.2 Emergency Remote Learning (ERL):

The equivalent response of students to remote learning environments in emergency contexts is called Emergency Remote Learning (ERL). Bozkurt et al. (2020) define them as those methods and innovations that learners use to engage with learning materials and activities, despite distance (often facilitated by a digital platform and technology). It highlights the difficulties and adjustments students experience when transitioning from face-to-face instruction to emergency remote learning.

Both expressions underscore how transient and reactive the shift to emergency remote teaching and learning is, and how much we need institutions, students and educators to be flexible, adaptable and supportive.

2.1.3 Emergent Remote Education

Hodges et al (2020) define Emergent Remote Education as a term that is used to refer to the rapid production and deployment of online or remote instruction programs in response to unexpected or emergent conditions. Natural disasters, public health emergencies, political instability, and other such events that disrupt conventional ways of providing instruction could be included in this concept.

To ensure that learning may proceed despite the difficulties presented by the emergency, emergent remote education entails swiftly adjusting to the situation and utilizing technology. Supporting instruction and communication between teachers and students it may

involve a range of strategies, such as remote teaching, online learning environments, virtual classrooms, digital resources, and communication tools.

Emergent remote education's reactivity and agility in handling unforeseen disturbances to the traditional educational system are its fundamental characteristics, allowing for learning to continue even in difficult situations.

2.2 Types of Environments of a Classroom

2.2.1 Facing a face-to-face classroom.

Face-to-face learning in class relies on the presence of teaching lecturers to teach in class. When the class is in a face-to-face environment, students are more involved and have spontaneous verbal communication in a permanent physical environment. Face-to-face, also known as traditional learning, is centered on students who are the source of knowledge.

According to Dhawan (2020) there exists a new need to implement and innovate some educational strategies. Transitioning from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning can be a unique experience for students and teachers; in some cases, they must adapt to the alternatives. Teaching online different subjects to varying ages requires different approaches, as online learning requires limited movement (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Teaching and learning bring an opportunity for innovative ways beyond a standard classroom setting. Online learning has supplied the opportunity to teach and learn in innovative ways, unlike the teaching and learning experiences in the normal classroom setting.

Due to the devastating impact of COVID-19, teaching and learning in schools worldwide sometimes had to shift from face-to-face classrooms to online platforms.

Some studies show that traditional face-to-face learning is still the preference in this challenging period. Meanwhile, the traditional approach is the preference of academics and students, there is a new challenge in re-facing a face-to-face classroom.

2.2.2 Exploring a Virtual Classroom

Online learning is when students use the internet to access learning material; interact with content, instructors, and other students; gain knowledge, build personal meaning, and grow through learning experiences. Home learning for all kinds of students becomes difficult and presents disadvantages for all students, including young learners.

Some of the disadvantages of using a virtual classroom are the difficulty to adjust, the connectivity, internet, and network issues, and the lack of physical exercise and correct physical spaces to keep healthy mental health. In some cases, students do not have a private room to take the lesson in a peaceful place. Institutions and educational systems must consider those whose parents are unsupportive and who are in home environments.

“Also, teaching students often have problems such as lack of self-discipline and learning attitude, this is even more challenging for academics who themselves are not experienced in online teaching” (Bao, 2020. P 113 -115). The dilemma is that teachers must select the best app to give the lessons, so it is difficult to have a proper system to fit the learning needs of all students.

2.2.3 Experimenting with a Hybrid Classroom

This type of environment in a classroom uses two or more different learning methods, it is a combination of face-to-face with online learning and is also a combination of different training media (technology, activities, and some types of events). A hybrid environment gives students positive learning and results in higher student achievement. It is usually done by combining face-to-face learning with online learning; in this case, online learning is commonly used and diverse, such as WhatsApp, E-learning, and other apps and platforms such as ZOOM, and Google Meet.

2.2.4 Teaching Young Learners in Different Environments

Some challenges facing the COVID pandemic time are the inability to access or use online learning and teaching tools, the difficulty in adjusting particularly for students that live in rural areas, also the ones that present low-income families, and the socio-emotional part is included such as anxiety, depression, and stress.

Teachers are a crucial part of this situation as a facilitator of online learning. In a sudden shift to online learning, traditional teachers did not have sufficient time to adjust to the new teaching platforms (.Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Therefore, teachers present a lack of sufficient knowledge of information technology, and this topic is poor (Chen et al., 2020)

Some challenges that teachers face is how to arrange online classes, how to carry out online teaching according to the lesson plans, which platform to teach online to choose from,

how to check the effect and quality of online teaching, and what to improve for further classes (Chen et al., 2020; Goh & Sanders, 2020; Teras et al., 2020).

2.3 Teaching English Preschoolers

Teaching English to preschoolers is a unique and rewarding challenge that requires creativity, patience, and a deep understanding of early childhood development. At this crucial stage, children are naturally curious and absorb information quickly, making it an ideal time to introduce a second language like English. However, according to Cameron (2001) preschoolers learn differently from older children; they require engaging, play-based activities that capture their attention and foster language acquisition in a natural, enjoyable way.

2.3.1 Knowing preschoolers: How do they learn?

All children experience developmental periods in life that are infancy, early, childhood, middle childhood, and young and older teens. These changes are related to the child's cognitive development. In the same way in the role of a teacher, as (Piaget, 1952; McDevitt & Ormond, 2013) said teachers must be aware of these changes (physical, social and emotional) that do not appear in all children at the same pace. In this order, it is important to consider that students must be motivated to learn according to their developmental periods. For them, it is not an easy task, and it depends on students' preexisting attitudes toward the school and learning another language considering their abilities.

The environment and the people that surround them engage with the learning process. The individuals in our immediate surroundings, along with the prevailing culture,

significantly shape students' attitudes toward language learning. The stance of parents and siblings plays a pivotal role. Moreover, the influence of a student's peers is noteworthy; if peers display enthusiasm for English learning, it markedly boosts the likelihood of the student being more motivated to engage with the subject.

To acquire a new language one must be motivated, and thanks to this motivation you can pay more attention to the ways that you acquire that language. To create a successful learning experience by teaching English as a second language does not only exist with the teacher. The students must be motivated to achieve this knowledge. Emphasizing creativity and multiple skills awakes in students the desire to learn a foreign language. "Interest is closely related to curiosity" (Crobbes and Schmidt (1991 P. 469-512). Students need to play their part too. It can find practical, social, intellectual, or emotional uses for our learning that maintain our interest and motivation.

To make the language learning process a more motivating experience instructors need to put a great deal of thought into developing programs that maintain student interest and have obtainable short-term goals. One of these goals could be that students have a general desire to be able to converse in English, in other words, they need to communicate by using the second language.

According to Marzano, R. J. (2003). Several general strategies can improve student motivation. Some of them are: to show genuine interest in students by seeing them as individuals with concerns and hopes, students need to be encouraged to present and explain any artwork they create in class, teachers should incorporate themes relevant to students, as

real communication happens when there is a need or desire to communicate. Teachers would ensure that lessons include the interests of all students at some point. Teachers should make tasks doable, providing clear instructions and ensuring activities are at an appropriate difficulty level and accept that not everything will be fun. The use of praise and rewards can be a significant motivator for primary-age children. Offer praise not only for outcomes but also for effort and engagement. Teachers should be specific when praising in order to help students understand what they did well and encourage them to continue putting in effort.

2.3.2 Teaching preschoolers using the platform ZOOM

Early childhood teachers draw on all their knowledge of technology and child development to support learning. The use of Zoom is comfortable for operating at school or home. Some of the features of this platform allow teachers to apply activities such as screen sharing, the use of digital books, and online links for games. Teachers can mute or unmute young learners and give the instruction appropriately. Teachers were able to record the class to review it later. Teaching preschoolers via Zoom, or other online platforms, requires thoughtful planning, creativity, and adaptability to meet the unique needs of young learners in a virtual setting.

In the context of virtual learning, engaging preschoolers presents unique challenges that require carefully tailored strategies. The constraints of young children's attention spans mean online sessions need to be short, typically 15 to 20 minutes. Interactive activities such as singing, storytelling, action breaks, and hands-on tasks can capture attention and promote participation. Visuals, objects, and manipulatives—such as stuffed animals, puppets, and

colorful pictures—make concepts easier to understand while making learning more exciting and interactive. The language and cognitive development of the children are supported through singing, rhymes, and music integrated into the lessons. Energy levels and attentiveness are sustained through regular movement activities incorporated into the session. As Donohue and Schomburg (2017) note, technology-based learning for young children is most effective when it is active, engaging, and developmentally appropriate.

Interactive storytelling is also a powerful tool in virtual classrooms that promote active participation as well as kids can answer the questions, predict the end and explain their perspectives. Props or illustrations can enable compelling stories, and that makes learning even better. Preschoolers ought to have a chance to learn by doing things hands-on so that they can tinker, make and play with the things they have at home. To stimulate learning and creativity, which can be through household objects, art supplies and sensory materials.

Preschoolers need to be given some basic instruction on how to make the most of Zoom features to avoid technology becoming a barrier to learning. Distraction-minimizing, age-appropriate technology is needed during sessions. Finally, teaching methods must be flexible and open to new ideas. To make sure that the learning process is useful for every individual student and for the entire group, teachers need to be prepared to adjust activities and pacing. For this reason, when working with preschoolers, it is necessary to consider the different levels of attention and involvement. As NAEYC (2012) emphasizes, *“Effective uses of technology and media are active, hands-on, engaging, and empowering... and are used as one of many options to support children’s learning.”* Teachers who specialize in early childhood education, such as those who have taught in preschools or developed curricula,

would likely use their professional experience and understanding of child development to guide their teaching methods in a virtual environment.

2.3.3 Interaction in a virtual classroom (teacher-student / student –teacher)

Swan (2002) examined perceived learning and interaction via a self-reported survey, which is a research method where people share information about themselves—like their thoughts, feelings, habits, experiences, or personal details—by answering questions, either in writing or through conversation. She found that students who had higher levels of interaction with content, interaction with their instructor, and interaction among other students had higher reported levels of satisfaction and learning. The percentage of course grades based on discussion and the frequency of instructor feedback led to higher levels of both measures.

In "Cooperation in the Classroom," Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1999) expand upon their previous work on cooperative learning and offer practical strategies and techniques for implementing cooperative structures in the classroom. The book is based on the principles of cooperative learning, emphasizing the importance of positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, interpersonal skills, and group processing.

These authors support a student-centered approach to education that encourages students to participate actively, support one another, and share accountability. Special features of their volume include recommendations for achieving successful implementation

of these educational structures in diverse educational settings and detailed descriptions of a few of them, such as reciprocal teaching, jigsaw, and think-pair-share.

2.4 Distance pedagogy

Distance pedagogy refers to developing and delivering effective training to students who may be dispersed geographically, or otherwise unable to attend traditional, face-to-face classroom sessions. Effective technology integration to disperse information and keep engagement and the evolution of pedagogy that is technological viable technologies that directly align with course objectives. To enhance engagement, it also involves stimulating communications, cooperative learning, and active learning between students and teachers. Moreover, offering comprehensive learner support in terms of resources, guidance, and support services helps learners to overcome challenges and maintain excitement and motivation during their distance education experiences. As Moore and Kearsley (2012) remind us, *“Successful distance education depends on systematic planning, careful design, and well-prepared resources, as well as the active involvement of learners and instructors.”* Distance pedagogy focuses on designing and delivering learning for students who cannot attend traditional classrooms, using technology not only to share information but also to foster engagement and interaction. It requires thoughtful planning that blends instructional design, teaching strategies, and resources to meet learners’ varied backgrounds, locations, and technical skills. As Moore and Kearsley (2012) note, *“interesting and meaningful learning experience has to be created for students in distance education to learn effectively and serve as an inspirational tune”* (p. 11). Technology serves as the bridge connecting students, teachers, and course materials, while effective communication strategies close the

physical gap and promote active participation. For preservice teachers, these principles are especially important, guiding how they prepare to teach in both virtual and face-to-face settings.

2.4 Preservice teachers facing how to teach with technology

However, in implementing online teaching and learning, most academic institutions experienced challenges including connectivity issues, lack of resources, students' and academics' difficulties adjusting, etc. As emphasized by Walker and White (2013), digital technologies not only establish novel settings for language use but also facilitate interactions among individuals who might not otherwise have chances to engage with each other.

One such problem is the lack of opportunities for preservice teachers to experience real world situations in traditional classroom settings. Distance learning can make it harder for preservice teachers to turn what they've learned in theory into real classroom practice. That's because, especially in teacher education, remote programs often don't offer as much hands-on experience as traditional training does. In face-to-face settings, future teachers get more chances to practice and learn directly, which really helps them feel ready for the classroom.. This limitation illustrates the necessity of employing innovative strategies to simulate classroom environments and provide alternatives to in-class instruction.

As noted by Baran, Correia, and Thompson (2011), "*becoming familiar with online learning spaces is a considerable hurdle that preservice teachers face in navigating remote pedagogical contexts.*" Since preservice teachers are typically trained in physical classroom settings, they may not be familiar with the technological platforms and tools used in remote

learning. It is essential for preservice teachers to learn how to use digital communication effectively to build a virtual classroom community where students can support each other and engage creatively in activities despite physical distance.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach that integrates theoretical insights with practical experiences. Preservice teachers require comprehensive training that prepares them to differentiate instruction effectively, ensure equity and inclusivity in online learning environments, navigate complex assessment practices, and continuously refine their teaching strategies through professional development initiatives. By bridging theory and practice, offering robust support mechanisms, and fostering a culture of ongoing learning and adaptation, educators can empower preservice teachers to thrive in the evolving landscape of distance pedagogy.

2.5 ZOOM

According to Zoom Video Communications (n.d.), Zoom offers video conferencing, webinars, and collaboration tools that support virtual communication and meetings. Some online platforms allow teachers to create courses (educational) and programs (skill development) (Petrie, 2020). The use of this platform has increased because of the pandemic situation. This platform, like others, is being explored for teaching and learning in a new era. Organizations, schools, and businesses have been offered for free to help and support both learning and teaching in a virtual environment. This platform includes options like workplace chat, video meetings, and file storage and supports the sharing of content such as Word, ODF, Excel, audio, and videos.

Zoom is a cloud-based video conferencing platform that allows users to virtually connect for online meetings, webinars, video conferences, and other collaborative activities. It offers features like video and audio conferencing, chat functionality, screen-sharing capabilities, and webinar hosting. Zoom gained significant popularity for its user-friendly interface, high-quality video and audio, and versatility across various devices like computers, smartphones, and tablets. Largely thanks to its accessibility and simplicity, it emerged in earnest during the COVID-19 epidemic, and with remote work and virtual meetings increasingly common.

2.6 Phases of a class

The structure of an English virtual class can be divided into individual phases, to keep students interested and obtain the expected learning results. According to Byrne (1990), an effective English lesson can be structured into distinct phases that guide both teacher and learner through the learning process. These include the preparation phase, where the teacher plans and organizes the lesson; the introduction phase, which sets the context and objectives; the engagement phase, aimed at capturing students' interest and motivating participation; the application phase, where learners actively practice and consolidate new knowledge; and the closing phase, which reinforces key points and ensures learners leave with a clear understanding of the lesson's content.

2.6.1. Preparation Phase

An organized and planned approach all through preparation: planning is the key to easy learning. This involves planning out a detailed lesson plan of what the class's objectives will be, exercises, and materials required during the course. To ensure that nothing distracts from the meeting, all of the technology features must be activated and working, such as Zoom or Google Classroom. Moreover, pre-class communication is key - one should send reminders to both parents and students, along with any preliminary information as needed.

2.6.2. Introduction Phase

The acclimating phase sets the course's climate and tone. The class normally begins with a warm welcome and an icebreaker aimed to entice the students to the lesson, also to create a casual atmosphere. The teacher then proceeds to expand on the learning goals of the session ensuring that all students know what will be known at the end of the lesson.

2.6.3. Engagement Phase

Presentation and production of the focus structure are generally done during the pre-engagement process. Lesson After checking attendance, new material is introduced with the visual aids, showing films, giving show-and-tell demonstrations, using flannel boards, etc.), allowing for only concise yet comprehensible explanation in order to retain interest. Engagement in interactive exercises and activities, such as polls, quizzes, group discussions and breakout rooms, can help students retain the information. Guided practice lets students practice the new topic with a teacher's guidance, often in groups or teacher-led activities.

2.6.4. Application Phase

The application process gives students the chance to demonstrate what they have learned and how they themselves have been transformed by the program. This might include doing such things as writing lines, completing tasks, or re-enacting events, experts say. The instructor also provides instant feedback, in addition to formative evaluations to understand student comprehension, and resolve any problematic issues.

2.6.5. Closing Phase

The Consolidation is an important aspect to end the session and to wrap up the learning. After reviewing the main ideas of the class, students are urged to consider what they have learned, frequently by asking thoughtful questions or doing a brief recap. Homework assignments are given to reinforce the lesson's objectives and offer additional practice. The session concludes on a positive note, with the instructor reminding students of upcoming classes and any necessary preparations.

2.6.6 Follow-Up Phase

The follow-up phase extends the learning process beyond the virtual classroom. Post-class communication is maintained with students and parents, often including the dissemination of additional resources, summaries of the class, and feedback on homework. This phase also involves the instructor's self-reflection, where the effectiveness of the lesson is evaluated, and areas for improvement in future virtual classes are identified.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Analytical Framework

People communicate through a variety of means, including body posture, gestures, eye contact, and speech in face-to-face interactions, as well as through images, sounds, colors, and writing when engaging with digital texts and online environments. Building on this understanding, Halliday (1978), in *Language as Social Semiotic*, proposed a theory of language grounded in a social-functional view of meaning, framing language as a system of choices that carry different potential meanings.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) expanded attention from language to other semiotic systems (or modes), laying the groundwork for extending and adapting social semiotics across a range of modes, giving the opportunity to multimodality. Multimodal analysis refers to the examination of various modes of communication, such as visual, verbal, and spatial elements, within a text or discourse. They stated that a mode refers to an abstract semiotic resource—a system of communication capable of carrying meaning. They distinguish this from the material media through which meaning is realized. Their earlier framework (2001) provide analytical resources for understanding how a number of modes inter-relate to generate meaning in a wide range of texts, such as web sites, multi-media presentations, advertising and film. They have been a major influence on scholars and researchers seeking to understand the nuanced relationship between modes in contemporary communication, and have significantly informed discussions of semiotics, media and discourse. In multimodality, “language” is just one of many resources for making meaning. From a semantic point of

view, an exhibition is a complex multimodal message. It provides a complex set of signs for the visitors who come to engage with it and from which they construct for themselves an infinite series of prompts for interpretation.

Focusing on the relations between different modes for creating meaning and how meaning is created and conveyed through them, the chapter provides an analytical procedure to deal with multimodal texts. They name a few major semiotic resources, e. g.

Visual elements	Verbal elements	Audio elements	Spatial elements
colors shapes layout	language text typography	sound music speech	arrangement of elements within a text spatial organization of a physical environment

3.1.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed by M.A.K. Halliday (1978) models language as a meaning system that emphasizes its functions in social life. Unlike other linguistic approaches, SFL does not prioritize higher-level discourse features over lower-level contextual elements. It has significantly influenced fields such as linguistics, education, and discourse analysis by providing a framework for understanding language's role in various contexts and for different communicative purposes. SFL views language as multifunctional, reflecting social and cultural values, and considers how communicative purposes, social status, and situational settings shape language use. It also focuses on genre

and register, analyzing how language varies with context and how text types are organized for social purposes, facilitating a comprehensive study of language as a complex system.

3.1.2 Semiotics

According to Pines (as cited in Berger, 2004), semiotics helps us make sense of the everyday signs and actions that communicate who we are.

Saussure (1915/1966) described language as a system of signs for expressing ideas, noting that while many forms of communication exist, language is the most important and complex of them all. He argues that language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, and other such systems. Yet, among all these forms of communication, language stands out as the most important.

Charles Sanders Peirce, known as one of the founders of semiotics, produced extensive and complex writings, but his classification of signs is especially useful for applied semiotics. He identified three types of signs: icons, which represent things by resemblance; indexes, which show a connection through cause and effect; and symbols, which rely on agreed-upon meanings. According to Peirce (as cited in Zeman, 1977), every sign relates to its object in one of these ways. He also emphasized that a sign is something that stands for something to someone, stressing the crucial role of the interpreter. Moreover, Peirce believed that the entire universe is filled with signs, highlighting the importance of semiotics in understanding meaning.

Semiotic resources are the various modes and tools that individuals use to create and convey meaning in communication. These resources extend beyond spoken and written

language to include a wide range of non-verbal elements such as images, gestures, sounds and spatial arrangements. Semiotic resources are the "signs" and "symbols" people use to produce meanings in numerous communicative contexts. Semiotics, which is the way signs and symbols form systems of communication, lies at the base of this concept.

Semiotic resources are what Kress (2010) defines as any symbolic or material tool that can be used to make meaning. This feature includes spoken words as well as physical, visual, and auditory modes. For students to better understand a concept, a teacher might use spoken explanations in combination with visual aids, such as diagrams, hand gestures and facial expressions, in a classroom. As semiotic resources, the various elements of this environment each contribute to meaning-making more generally.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), semiotic resources are not static but dynamic, and are conditioned by historical, social and cultural contexts. As such, a gesture, color or sound may carry different meanings depending on the situation. For example, a color such as red can be a symbol of riches in one culture and fear in another. It follows that to accurately define the meaning of semiotic resources we follow along the vein of the context.

By integrating semiotic resources, multimodal communication becomes capable to realize a certain meaning in different modes, such as language, area, sound and pictures. More advanced forms of communication are added when various methods are combined. So, for example, a page may use layout (spatial mode), graphics (visual mode) and content (linguistic mode) to construct a unified argument. The design guides the reader, the design underlines interpretation, and the images help underpin the message of the text. Every mode contributes in different attributes of meaning.

It is crucial to consider the link between different semiotic resources in multimodal texts (Jewitt, 2009). The intended message may be simplified or more nuanced by the manner in which these resources interact. For instance, the tone of voice in a video (a semiotic resource in the auditory mode) can counterpoint the text on screen and contribute to audience understanding and deployment of a message or be used to produce certain affective responses. But if the pitch doesn't match the text, miscommunication can arise. The concept of semiotic resources is widely applied to a range of fields such as discourse analysis, media studies, and education. Teachers use various semiotic resources to cater for different ways of learning and for the understanding of abstract concepts by students. For instance, to present content in a more engaging and comprehensible manner, a teacher could make use of interactive simulations, models, and diagrams to explain complex process during a science lesson (Bezemer & Kress, 2008).

Media analysis can deconstruct hidden meanings and ideologies through analysis of the semiotic resources used in films, ads, and digital media. As van Leeuwen (2005) put it, semiotic resources refer to the means by which the story and characters are viewed and sound tracked among other things such as colors and camera angles.

3.1.3 Paralanguage

Paralanguage refers to the non-verbal elements that accompany spoken words in conversation, encompassing tone, pitch, volume, and rhythm. It enhances or alters the meaning of spoken language and is integral to nonverbal communication alongside posture, gestures, and facial expressions. Research in this area, initiated by Trager (1958), shows that

paralanguage conveys emotions like sarcasm, confidence, or doubt, making it a powerful tool that can either support or undermine the verbal message.

Paralanguage has practical applications in fields such as marketing, education, and interpersonal communication. For instance, teachers can enhance classroom dynamics and student engagement by effectively using tone and pitch, making language learning more dynamic (McCroskey & Richmond, 2006). Understanding paralanguage can improve interpersonal communication by reducing misunderstandings and enhancing clarity, especially when verbal and nonverbal signals conflict.

Matthiessen (2004, 2007, 2009) links SFL research on children's language to the evolution of language and semiotics, showing that children initially use sound, facial expressions, and gestures before developing more specialized linguistic abilities. Vocal parameters like timbre, tempo, and loudness, along with body language, remain essential expressive resources. Additionally, pauses and fillers indicate uncertainty or thought processing. Ultimately, paralanguage enriches communication by helping listeners interpret the speaker's intended meaning and emotions.

3.2 Research Design

A qualitative approach serves our purpose for this case study, which analyses the practices of an English student-teacher at a public school in central Mexico. The need is, therefore, to select case studies which develop crucial theoretical contributions and overlap well with the problem statement. Some cases may be less appropriate than others for certain problems. The investigator of the present study must be constantly on guard and self-aware.

By examining both linguistic and semiotic aspects of the Zoom classroom through the prism of multimodal analysis helped to comprehend the phenomenon better. A key component of this analysis is based on the social semiotic approach to meaning making in context, developed by Halliday (1978), for linguistic studies, and then expanded to include other semiotic modes by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). The social semiotic approach studies how language and other forms of communication, including sounds, images, and gestures, work in their social contexts to create meaning.

By considering linguistic decisions as a reflection of context, purpose, and audience, Halliday's (1978) seminal work in social semiotics articulated language as a social resource. The method was further developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen, who examined the role non-linguistic modes play in meaning-making and communication. By using these lenses, multimodal analysis of the Zoom environment sheds light on how spoken words are not the only modes that contribute to information transmission, rapport building, and the dynamics of the virtual classroom. Other modes that are illuminated include visual cues and aural signals. Therefore, by emphasizing the interplay between different communication modes inside the Zoom platform, this multimodal paradigm offers important insight into the complex nature of online education.

3.3 Participants

The participant in this case study is a pre-service teacher of a second grade. The teacher was doing her professional practice in Autumn 2021 at the program “Enseñando Inglés en preescolar” with folio 150650, she is a student of the BUAP. Her professional

practice was done at a public school. She gave English lessons to seven-year-old children via Zoom.

3.4 Procedure

In this thesis the primary data source was the video recorded lesson. She taught a 30-minute English lesson to seven-year-old children via Zoom. The teacher also provided parents with weekly lesson plans and materials to aid them and their children with the contents of the English course. The data was collected in the fall of 2021, the student-teacher video recorded one of her Zoom classes as part of the teaching training requirements. To accomplish the requirements, she did a lesson plan, designed all her materials and wrote a video reflection where self-analyzed. The participant signed a consent letter (view annex) to allowed to use her video. To protect the students' identity, only capital letters were used as pseudonyms.

3.5 Data collection

According to Creswell (2014), data collection is a systematic process of gathering information from various sources to address specific research questions or objectives. It involves obtaining, measuring, and analyzing data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon or to evaluate hypotheses. The quality and reliability of the research findings largely depend on the methods and procedures used in data collection.

3.5.1 Types of Data Collection Methods

1. Qualitative Methods: They are intended to produce intimate descriptions of complex phenomena through non-numeric data. Qualitative Naturalistic techniques utilized include: the observation, focus group, and interview. Qualitative data collection is used to explore complex phenomena and understand participants' perspectives and experiences (Creswell, 2014)

3.5.2 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

1. Observations: Through observation, i.e. the presence of the researcher, actions and interactions are systematically recorded. Whether this is as a participant or non-participant depends on the research aims and context (Angrosino, 2007).

How and what to transcribe is a challenging theoretical and practical decision in multimodal transcription (Norris, 2019). Due to the sheer complexity and diversity of social media data, researchers are able to analyze it from multiple angles at once—an ability that underpins much of what makes such data rich and revealing (Zappavigna, 2019). Annotation with multiple levels of description that can be used to interpret cross-modal connections has been the preference of scholars as a means of addressing this cascade of complexity.

3.6 Data Analysis

In this section, the analysis of the data is described in terms of the social semiotic model as developed in Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) to study the teaching -and learning process in virtual classrooms. Semiotic resources, by their account, are comprised of various modes of communication such as body movements and vocalizations and more (e.g. music,

pictures). They are versatile resources and can be deployed by people to act and communicate in ways that articulate their purposes and interests (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). This paper explores the Zoom classroom as a multimodal text that conveys the subtle dynamics within the online English class by incorporating visual images, nonverbal signals (paralanguage), and speech together. In the post-Covid19 educational reality, this multimodal approach is essential to explore how different communication modes work together in the construction of social relations and meaning-creation (Zappavigna, 2019).

3.6.1 Multimodal Transcription


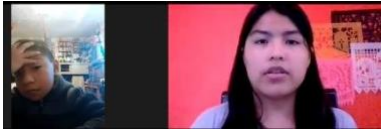
The analysis was initiated based on a multimodal transcription, where we organized the three main semiotic modes – the text, the picture and the verbal - nonverbal messages – in a structured table. This process supports the concept of multimodality in that every mode had a unique role in the comprehension of the lesson. The transcription facilitated a detailed examination of how these modes worked by segmenting the lesson into teacher-student exchanges of equivalent duration. The context in which each interaction took place was highlighted by using snapshots to provide a more comprehensive picture of what happens in class, and an effort was made to align the audio with the visual. This process of multimodal interaction is neatly illustrated by the first three columns of Table 1, which show how semiotic resources come together to generate meaning: the text column provides spoken language, the image column visual information.


After that, the multimodal analysis was enriched by adopting a paralinguistic perspective. In this instance, the spotlight of attention was directed toward how verbal messages (including those in student responses) reinforced or contradicted the

nonverbal exchanges. To grasp how these modes, intersect and manifesting the transmission of meaning, accounts of facial expressions, body language and other non-verbal symbols (column 4 in Table 1) were looked at. This range of multimodal communication strategies made visible how multimodality works within online learning, pushing beyond the spoken word to include a range of communicative resources in the construction of meaning.

The third thematic analysis that emerged from integrating these multiple modes, themes emerged, and patterns recurred to offer in-depth understanding of instructional processes. This combination of multimodal approaches including text, visual and paralinguistics together, has revealed the complexities of online learning including insights into the challenges of novice teachers and young students. With a multimodal framework, the research was able to examine how the multiple modes interacted to shape the virtual classroom experience, as opposed to the modes being studied in isolation.

Table 1. Multimodal transcription of a virtual class in Zoom

Time-frame	Text from the lesson transcription	Image from the video recorded lesson	Paralanguage analysis	Thematic analysis
0-34s	<p>T: ok</p> <p>T: Chris, Bueno la primera actividad que vamos a realizar va a ser una como un tipo evaluación.</p> <p>SILENCE 7s</p> <p>T: Eeemmm te voy a presentar las descripciones y tú me vas a decir ¿qué señalización es, ¿OK?</p>	 	<p>Hands on the cheek.</p> <p>Hands on the forehead.</p>	<p>Feelings of concern.</p> <p>Confusion Frustration.</p>

	<p>T: Recuerda que me la tienes que decir en inglés.</p> <p>T: ahhh ver dame un segundo, está tardando un poquito ¿Si me escuchas verdad?</p> <p>C: si maestra...</p>		<p>Hands on the temple.</p>	<p>Dealing with technical issues</p>
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This approach was employed to explore entire class transcription, which proved useful to investigate how different semiotic resources interplay to make meanings in social encounters. In addition, the multimodal analysis presented a comprehensive and systematic structure which helped to deepen understanding of communication in diverse sites of study such as the post pandemic English classroom with the inclusion of modes of communication other than speech (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Zappavigna, 2019)

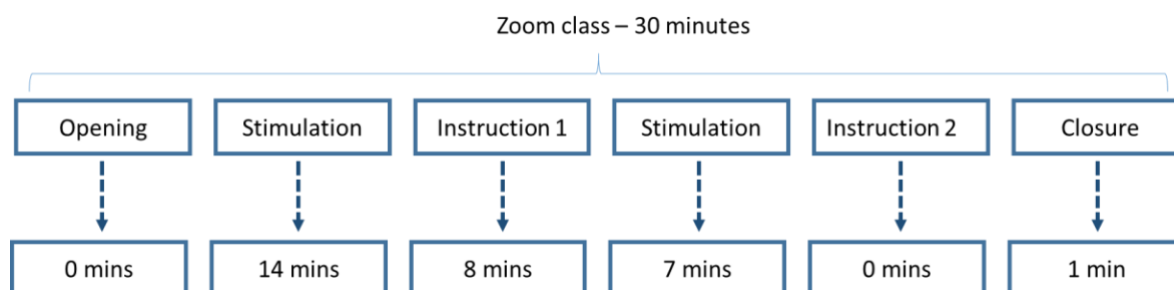
Chapter IV: RESULTS

The following section offers an organized overview and highlights of the key findings from a qualitative multimodal analysis of a Zoom class for young learners led by a pre-service ELT teacher. It consists of an introduction to the phases of the lesson in an online setting. A discussion on the challenges faced at each step is provided following this. Finally, we explore the dynamics in the online classroom that facilitated or impeded the learning of the language.

4.1 Phases of a Virtual Class

As said before, every analysis presented a different viewpoint on the online English course. The opening, stimulation, instruction, and closure phases of a typical English lesson were modified to fit the virtual classroom's format. While these phases are typically associated with in-person classes, they were modified for the virtual setting to ensure an effective lesson structure and provide a full representation of the class. However, the analysis revealed that not all of these phases were present in the observed lesson (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Visual depiction of a virtual class conducted via Zoom.



4.1.1 Opening Phase

The opening phase usually establishes the lesson's tone and framework, including essential aspects such as greetings, a friendly introduction, taking attendance, and outlining the day's goals. Nevertheless, a preliminary examination of the film reveals that certain routines were either left out or not captured in the video. Ignoring this first step can affect the classroom environment and the flow of the course. Without this foundational framework, students could struggle to comprehend the lesson's objective and how it relates to their more general learning objectives.

4.1.2 Stimulation Phase

The phases of instruction and stimulation usually work in tandem to support efficient teaching and learning. The goal of the stimulation phase is to pique students' curiosity, encourage participation, and inspire active engagement with learning assignments. In contrast, the instruction phase focuses on crucial teaching elements including activities and assessments. Two cycles of stimulation and instruction were observed in this lesson: the first lasted 22 minutes, while the second, incomplete, lasted only 7 minutes. This unequal allocation highlights a clear disparity in the amount of time allotted to each stage.

4.1.3 Closure phase

In the closure phase, the lesson is reviewed, key ideas are reaffirmed, and students are guaranteed to leave with a firm grasp of what they have learned. In this case, however, the stimulation and instruction phases occupied most of the lesson, leaving only a minute for

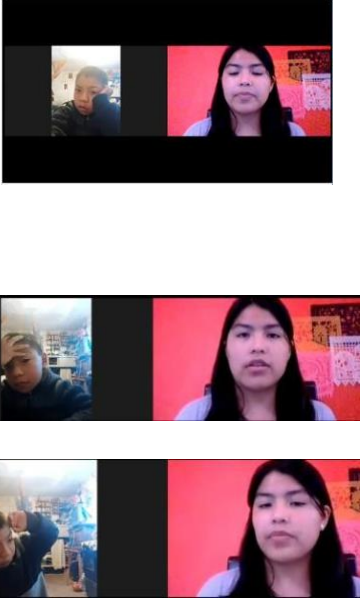
closure. It is worth noting that this lesson was conducted by a student-teacher still in training; thus, the observed gaps were not deliberate but rather indicative of her developing teaching skills. Despite these challenges, she made a genuine effort to adhere to her lesson plan. Nonetheless, the virtual setting introduced obstacles that interrupted the lesson's flow, as discussed below.

4.2 Dealing with technical issues

Technical difficulties impacted every phase of the class, as shown in Table 2, which illustrates how these issues disrupted the lesson's flow. In one instance, the teacher describes a sign and asks students to interpret its meaning, only to realize she wasn't sharing her screen, preventing the students from seeing the images. During this segment, the teacher was focused on giving instructions while also attempting to fix the slide display problem. The table also points to a disconnect between the teacher's verbal instructions and the absence of visual aids, leading to visible frustration from a child struggling to keep up. The teacher's attention was divided between dealing with internet connection issues and trying to show the correct slide, which was further complicated by a slow connection. As a result, there was a perception that the teacher was not fully engaged with the students. Addressing technical problems quickly in a virtual class is crucial to ensure a smooth and effective learning experience.

Table 2. Dealing with technical issues in a virtual class in Zoom

Time-frame	Text from the lesson transcription	Image from the video-recorded lesson	Paralanguage analysis	Thematic analysis
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0-34s	<p>T: Recuerda que me la tienes que decir en inglés.</p> <p>T: aahhh ver dame un segundo, está tardando un poquito ¿Si me escuchas verdad?</p> <p>C: si maestraa</p>		Distraction ↘	Dealing with technical issues
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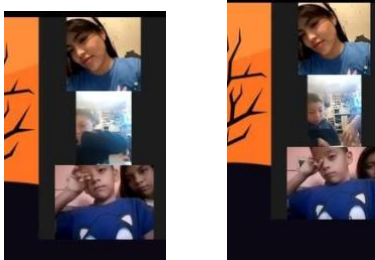
4.3 Divergence between speech and image

The mismatch between verbal explanations and visual images can cause confusion for children, as illustrated in Table 3. In the excerpt, the teacher attempts to explain a road sign to Chris but receives no response. Despite her repeated descriptions, Chris lacks a visual reference to guide his answer. Although Chris notices an image on the screen, he identifies it as a "little ghost" rather than a road sign. This discrepancy occurs because children learn through visual associations, and despite the slide being colorful, it failed to support Chris in making the correct connections. Consequently, this led to significant misunderstanding of the instructions and confusion, which adversely affected his performance and engagement in the class.

4.4 Confusion in the task

Furthermore, the visible confusion among the children highlighted the likely involvement of an adult, probably a parent, in the background. The arrow in the observation indicates a hand movement intended to assist the children in finding the answer. However, this intervention only increased the child's anxiety, which hindered their ability to complete the task. Moreover, offering answers directly can inadvertently hinder children from developing their own problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities.

Table 3. Confusion to complete the task in a virtual class in Zoom

Time-frame	Text from the lesson transcription	Image from the video recorded lesson	Paralanguage analysis	Thematic analysis
07:47 al 08:12	<p>T: the next one the fifth sign.</p> <p>T: This sign has a kind of trumpet</p> <p>T: trompeta</p> <p>T: and it means that you can't make noise.</p> <p>SILENT TIME</p> <p>T: no puedes hacer ruido</p> <p>T: ¿Cómo se llama?</p> <p>C-. NO Horn</p> <p>T: Ok no horn</p>	 	<p>An extra person appears ↘</p> <p>Hand on the eye</p>	<p>Speech and image divergence</p> <p>Confusion on the task</p>



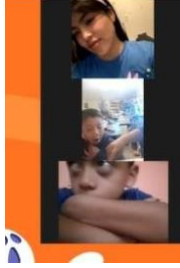

	<p>T. muy bien</p> <p>T: ¿Quién lo dijo?</p> <p>T: very good</p> <p>C: Cris, Cristobal</p> <p>T: ok great Cris.</p>			
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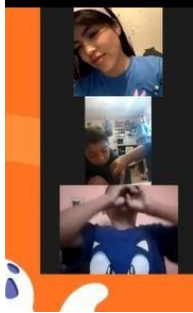


4.5 Low focus on the student

Due to the technical issues, the student's concerns were overlooked as the teacher continues with the lesson without addressing doubts. This lack of responsiveness may be attributed to the teacher's focus on following a predetermined lesson plan, potentially neglecting the need for clarification or assistance from students. Consequently, some students might feel neglected or frustrated, impacting their engagement and understanding of the lesson.

At one point during this class, the teacher provided a significant amount of information, it is important to involve all students by asking leading questions and seeking individual responses, which made the lesson tedious enough for one student (J). During this time, the other student (C) became distracted, focusing on something or someone else or doing another activity while moving his hands seemingly doing a circle, while the teacher was giving instructions. This behavior indicates a lack of engagement and understanding. Table 4 highlights this issue, emphasizing the need for a more adaptive and responsive teaching approach to keep students interested and effectively meet their needs.

Table 4. Low focus on the student in a virtual class in Zoom

Time-frame	Text from the lesson transcription	Image from the video recorded lesson	Paralanguage analysis	Thematic analysis
09:22 al 10:15	<p>T: The next one ya casi terminamos</p> <p>T: you can see this sign in case of fire or other.</p> <p>T: emergency</p> <p>SILENCIO</p> <p>T: ¿cuál será?</p> <p>SILENCE</p> <p>C: Imit</p> <p>T: ¿cuál?</p> <p>C: sevet nir</p> <p>T: mmmm a ver, repeat it again, no ¿ok?</p> <p>T: se las voy a presentar</p> <p>T: EXIT</p> <p>T: ok or exit emergency</p>	   	<p>J. yawns</p> <p>J: is looking something else ↖</p> <p>J: continue looking something else ↖</p> <p>C. someone else appears</p> <p>J: is bored</p>	Low focus

		  	<p>J: is looking someone else</p> <p>C: an extra hand appears</p> <p>J: is doing an strange movement</p> <p>T: shows the sign</p>	
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4.6 No scaffolding of abstract knowledge

Lack of scaffolding of abstract knowledge is a problem, especially when students are expected to learn something they have no or little background information about. Instructional practices that assume that students who have been exposed to abstract ideas already understand them, may result in a disconnect between students' ability to engage with and utilize those ideas effectively. As a consequence, children might struggle to complete certain tasks that require advanced cognitive skills, which could interfere with their learning and broader academic performance.

Scaffolding is the educational term for structured support that guides students towards the level of understanding required to gain mastery of the material. This approach often involves explaining challenging problems, providing explicit directions, and gradually reducing assistance as students develop skills. In both cases, teachers might fail to provide the necessary scaffolding if they assume the students get the more abstract concepts, prevent them from empowering (De Corte, Verschaffel, & Op't Eynde, 2000) these ideas and make it more difficult to engage and master them.

Confusion and frustration may develop among the learners due to lacking support, reducing the level of motivation and engagement. Furthermore, students might not be able to fully understand abstract concepts without the proper guidance, and this would hinder them on tests and limit their ability to apply their learning to the world around them.

4.7 Unawareness of Virtual Classroom Management

There is still so much to learn about how best to run a virtual-based classroom, which suggests a major area for future educational research and practical application. Yet online education, which has become even more popular due to the COVID-19 pandemic's abrupt move to virtual classrooms, does not leave a lot of empirical evidence about the best ways to manage these online classrooms. Uncertainty affects several constructs, like engaging students, managing classroom disruptions, or ensuring equal opportunity to participation. Supporting the learning environment, encouraging learner interaction, and facilitating educational objectives are just some of the features of good virtual classroom management. However, there exist challenges in virtual settings, including technological

barriers, lack of physical connection and potential distractions, which do not lend themselves to the application of traditional supervisory techniques. The optimal strategies for creating an overall positive learning environment or the adaptation of these strategies in online learning have not been well-studied. Moreover, additional studies are required to establish the role of teachers in VS (ML having final word) How we teach Technology is just a tool, but while it does house numerous benefits, teachers will need to adapt to different forms of teaching if they are to fulfill the needs of their differing students. Balancing between these duties and the goal to create an inviting and inspiring environment is key to successful online learning.

4.7 Excessive use of the first language (Spanish)

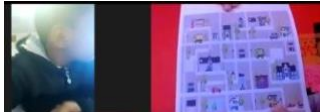

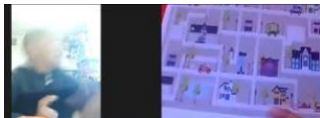

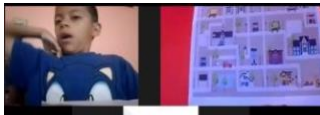

Overuse of the first language (L1) in second language (L2) instruction may have numerous issues and implications for the successful acquisition of a language, particularly in the case of developing proficiency in a foreign language. Strong dependence on the mother tongue, i.e. Spanish, when studying English can undo the benefits of immersion language instruction. Above average L1 use students are exposed to L2 more often, which give these students less chance to read and listen, two important skills for language learning to take place (Krashen, 1985). This reduced exposure acts as a barrier to language immersion, which is necessary for L2 acquisition because it prevents students from thinking about and interacting in the L2. Additionally, instead of promoting direct comprehension and use of the L2, continuous use of the L1 may impede the development of spontaneous language usage and critical thinking by fostering a dependence on translation (Cook, 2001). Furthermore, students' motivation and confidence may suffer if they rely too much on L1, as they may

grow accustomed to using their native tongue to comprehend and finish assignments, which may lower their interest in L2. While occasional use of L1 can be useful for clarifying complex concepts, it is crucial to balance its use with maximizing L2 exposure and practice. Effective language instruction should strategically incorporate L1 to support understanding without detracting from the goal of increasing L2 proficiency, encouraging students to engage with the target language as much as possible (Swain, 1985, p. [235-253]).

4.8 Offline semiotic practices

In addition, there were challenges related to the physical environment in which the children attended their virtual classes. In a post-pandemic virtual setting, children participate in lessons from home, and activities occurring outside the screen—referred to as offline semiotic practices—are not visible to the instructor but still impact the class. Examples of these offline semiotic practices include family members eating, people walking by in the background, or engaging in conversations. While these situations are not directly observable during online teaching, they are reflected in the children's behavior and interactions. For instance, as shown in the second image in Table 5, both children are seen turning their heads towards someone or something, which results in distraction.

Table 5. Offline semiotic practices in a virtual class in Zoom

Time-frame	Text from the lesson transcription	Image from the video recorded lesson	Paralanguage analysis	Thematic analysis
18'51'' - 19'51''	<p>T: Vamos a hacer otro ejercicio</p> <p>T: quiero llegar de la casa amarilla “the yellow house a pink house”</p> <p>T: entonces si estoy aquí que hago?</p> <p>T: Keep left or keep right?</p> <p>J: keep left</p> <p>T: ok keep left</p> <p>T: y aquí estoy</p> <p>T: y luego down or go up?</p> <p>J: turn turn lef</p> <p>T: go down or go up?</p> <p>T: go down hacia abajo</p> <p>T: go up hacia arriba</p> <p>J: go down</p> <p>T: down</p> <p>Baby sounds</p> <p>T: ok ya estoy aquí</p> <p>T: vean eh</p>	     	<p>C: turns his head to the right</p> <p>both students turn their head to the right</p> <p>J: yawns for again</p> <p>C: pays attention to the screen</p> <p>Baby crying sounds appear</p>	<p>low focus on the student / teacher</p> <p>Distraction</p> <p>Boredom</p>

4.9 Have electronic devices handy.

Each class is in its own unique context of the students' needs and characters, and the way in which teaching is done and responded to. These factors might be even more

pronounced in virtual classrooms, where various other affordances and challenges exist when compared to a traditional physical setup. The students' perception of the lesson is often affected by the way the lesson is delivered, so the fact that there has been a positive change in their perception upon online learning has made management of the virtual classroom a priority. Beyond just platform and tool uses, good management in an online setting means being able to promote a culture where learners feel they are valued and want to participate. It means establishing clear guidelines, promoting communication when individuals may be geographically separated, and adapting to unexpected challenges like distractions at home or connectivity issues. These are all building blocks of an effective online learning space that promotes students' growth and a sense of educational continuity.

4.10 Delivering video reflection

After reviewing and assessing the class, the teacher came to know about several troubles that emerged. Even though she wouldn't resolve these issues immediately, this inward reflection provided valuable teachable moments. By recognizing these issues, the teacher could better know what needs improving for next lessons. This episode revealed the importance of ongoing self-auditing and evolving teaching practice. If she can identify and address these problems the trainer can sprout higher quality of instruction as well as more student participation and develop more successful tools and methods for new training. The recursive nature of teaching is revealed in this interpretive account, for each course influences and informs subsequent instruction, providing greater understanding of the requirement of the good teacher and the ultimate effectiveness of an online learning space.

4.11 House practices

The teacher and other participants in virtual classrooms are usually unaware of the physical surroundings of the students. This loss of visibility includes a variety of outside distractions and activities that take place outside of the screen. Family relatives eating, someone watching TV in the next room, or cooking sounds coming from the kitchen are some off-screen experiences students might be going through while the teacher is devoted to the digital connection. While we cannot see or hear these behind-the-scenes behaviors during the virtual session, they certainly influence student engagement and participation.

Adams and Mikolay (2004) note that “invisible” tasks and external factors in students’ environments—such as background noise or household activities—can affect their focus and participation in online classes. These unseen influences highlight the importance of considering the broader learning context when designing and delivering online instruction.

An important lesson for teachers to note is the presence of these background factors and the effects these may have. Although they cannot control these outside factors, teachers can be aware of them in order to form more flexible, empathetic teaching approaches. This level of consciousness suggests that a teacher can better tailor his or her virtual teaching strategies to address potential distractions and its impact on students' learning when the teacher knows about them.

4.12 Parents trying to help.

Parents’ involvement in students’ learning in online courses could have mixed meanings since parents could have both good and bad impact on their children's learning

from online courses. One issue I have seen is that parents often try to help their children through the class itself by answering questions or completing problem sets for them. This support is well-meaning but can be detrimental to students' learning. By offering up answers immediately, this approach can disrupt students' ability to reason through problems and figure out solutions for themselves. And when students are refused the chance to impractical and not only practice but apply what they have learned, this undermines the learning process and impairs their ability to retain and understand the material. When parents give answers to children, they short-circuit this process and do their children a serious disservice, setting them up for the frustration and failure that more students face.

Pupils may also be affected in terms of motivation and self-belief through such support. If doing so, students can grow both too reliant on outside help and too uninterested in resolving difficulties on their own. The upshot of this is that such learner may lose confidence on their ability to do things and feel less in control of their learning. For educators, the importance of talking to parents about allowing kids to explore content on their own cannot be stressed enough for helping to solve these issues.

Chapter V Conclusion

5.1 Overview of Findings

This thesis takes a closer look at one virtual English classroom for young learners in Mexico in the aftermath of a pandemic, to bring attention to classroom practices in a digital setting. To obtain a balanced view of English language learning this research employed a multi-modal perspective to investigate the relation among language, image and non-verbal communication. Multiple modes—text, image and non-verbal cues—also added significance and deepened insights gleaned from analyzing online English as a second language instruction. But the study also found some unique challenges that online learning presents, such as technological issues that affect educational achievement as well as children’s health. Those challenges illustrate just how hard it is to ensure that younger students receive quality language education and emotional support in a virtual environment.

5.2 Classroom Practices and Challenges

Various components of a virtual class, including preparation, delivery and engagement, received significant focus. Technical challenges, like unpredictable internet connections and software glitches, repeatedly interrupted the flow of the lesson and led to discrepancies between the intended and perceived meaning, the study found. Such interruptions are additional barriers to the engagement and comprehension at young student ages. These issues can also inhibit learning and potentially damage students’ emotional well-being through frustration, disengagement or, in some cases, anxiety. The thesis highlights

the importance of smooth technical integration and good virtual classroom management to alleviate these challenges.

5.3 Emotional Learning Environments and Teacher Training

The findings emphasize the importance of good virtual teaching practices in terms of delivering potent, engaging courses and fostering a joyful, affective learning environment. Young children need to feel safe, motivated, and connected to thrive in a virtual world and the emotional aspect of learning, as such, is particularly important for them to engage fully in learning experiences. Therefore, the thesis recommends better designed teacher training programs for the digital age, concentrating on educating teachers about digital literacy, support through emotions, and the management of the virtual classroom. With the continued application of virtual learning as a teaching strategy in the post-pandemic period, this need is particularly imperative.

5.4 Limitations

This study provides useful insights into online English instruction for young learners, but it also has some limitations. Because it was conducted in a single virtual classroom in Mexico, the findings cannot be generalized to all contexts or age groups. The focus was mainly on language, images, and non-verbal communication, leaving out other important factors such as family support, socio-economic conditions, and school policies. In addition, technological issues like poor internet connections and unequal access to devices affected participation and learning. Although the study considered children's health and emotional well-being, these aspects were not measured in depth. Finally, the research took place right

after the COVID-19 pandemic, a transitional period that may not fully represent long-term practices in virtual education.

5.5 Future Research Directions.

Longitudinal studies: Conducting a longitudinal study will provide a better understanding of how virtual classroom dynamics evolve over time. These analyses might include whether and how engagement, interaction modes, or even learning outcomes have evolved over time, yielding information about the long-term impact of virtual learning on student development.

Comparative Research: A comparison between virtual and traditional classrooms would provide key insights into how learning outcomes, student satisfaction and instructional effectiveness vary. Such studies might uncover teaching techniques that are context specific, and those that work in both contexts.

Effect of Technical challenges: Further studies that examine the effect of technical issues such as software bugs and connection problems affect the learning and general health of kids. Understanding these factors may lead to the development of more reliable virtual learning environments and in reducing the negative effects of interruptions.

Multi-Modality: Examining how written, visual, aural and video are interacting and affecting student engagement and understanding will provide strategies for how best to utilize these sources in an online learning environment. In a cyber-world, improved understanding of how these pieces can be assembled might enhance instruction and student engagement.

Teacher Training Programs - Explore effective models and practices for designing and implementing teacher professional development programs for online learning. When teachers use professional development approaches focused on the development of digital literacy and virtual instruction, they may be better equipped to manage the challenges new learning environments can pose.

Social and Emotional Impact: A key area of inquiry is the social and emotional element of online education. Especially for the younger ones, matters such as mental health, motivation, and isolation should be examined very well, so support mechanisms can be put in place to provide a positive learning environment.

Context and Culture: Finally, further research on how contextual and cultural factors impact the effectiveness of online language instruction. Investigating the influence of students' educational experience and background on international teaching sessions could lead to more inclusive and culturally sensitive teaching.

5.5 Closing Remarks

The research has been released underscoring the pros and cons of online language learning for young learners. By gaining a deeper understanding of the complex interplay among classroom processes, affective support, and technological features, we might develop more powerful strategies for fostering language development and well-being in virtual worlds. Further insight into Virtual Learning (VL) and its impact on the trajectory of education is generated by addressing the gaps identified in this study and pursuing the postulated lines of future research.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I

Carta de consentimiento

El propósito de esta investigación es explorar las nuevas dinámicas de clase que se dan en la modalidad en línea y con el uso de diferentes plataformas.

Yo, Itzel Nayeli Barranco Munive, estoy de acuerdo en compartir una video grabación de clase realizado en el contexto de mi Práctica Profesional en el otoño del 2021. Comprendo que el propósito de este proyecto es recabar información que permita comprender la enseñanza del inglés en nuevas modalidades y mejorar la formación docente. Es de mi conocimiento que la video grabación será usada para tal fin.


Comprendo que las grabaciones pueden ser reproducidas para los participantes de este proyecto, pero no serán reproducidas en ninguna otra circunstancia sin mi permiso. Entiendo que la información será tratada de manera confidencial.

Proporciono / No proporciono permiso para compartir la video grabación de clase.

Deseo / No deseo mantener anonimato en todos los materiales producidos como resultado de este trabajo de campo. Comprendo que si deseo mantener mi anonimato se hará todo lo posible por mantenerlo pero no se puede garantizar al cien por ciento por la naturaleza del material.

Proporciono / no proporciono permiso para compartir material primario con los participantes del proyecto (notas de campo, audio y video grabaciones).

Proporciono / no proporciono mi permiso para publicar material secundario impreso o en internet (presentaciones, trabajos académicos, análisis del lenguaje).

Firma del participante: 

Fecha: 10 de agosto de 2022