

FACTORS INFLUENCING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN AN EFL
REMOTE LEARNING METHODOLOGY.

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RIONEGRO, ANTIOQUIA

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Trabajo de grado optar por el título de:

Licenciado en Lenguas Extranjeras

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2020

Nota de aceptación

Firma del Presidente del Jurado

Firma del Jurado

Rionegro, diciembre de 2020

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Abstract

The purpose of the present qualitative study was to identify the factors that influenced high school students' participation in an EFL remote learning methodology during a lockdown, which was a consequence from COVID-19 pandemic. This project focused on systematizing the experiences towards the participation of 9 tenth grade students belonging to a public institution located in Rionegro, Antioquia. The teacher in charge of the English subject and a pre-service teacher, who was one of the researchers, were also involved in this study. A research diary, an interview, a survey, and some telephone calls were conducted with the aim of collecting the data; thereby, knowing participants' opinions and perceptions towards students' level of participation having into consideration the pandemic time.

The different results that emerged from the analysis of the collected information demonstrated that English teaching and learning process was affected not only by the lockdown but also by the remote learning methodology. Students participated in the asynchronous activities proposed in the English subject just as a manner of requirement. There were some factors that mainly influenced this participation. Firstly, the linguistic factors which were associated with students' English proficiency to develop the activities and ask for clarification. Secondly, the affective factors that were mostly related to students' motivation to be committed and engaged with this subject. Finally, the students' social condition was another important factor that influenced their participation, since students' resources did not allow them to have synchronous classes, which could be more effective for their learning processes.

Key words: EFL (English as a Foreign Language), students' participation, remote learning, influencing factors.

1. Literature review

With reference to the studies that were related to students' participation in EFL classes and education during the lockdown, five research projects were found. One of them was conducted in Colombia. In the case of the four remaining studies, they were carried out in international contexts. The following report was organized in terms of the date or year in which the projects were executed.

The first study associated with education during lockdown was conducted by Shenoy, Mahendra and Vijay in India, 2020. The participants were faculties associated with higher education. It aimed to understand four categories towards virtual classrooms during lockdown due to Covid-19, which were: technology adoption, teaching and learning process, students' engagement and faculty experience.

The researchers collected the data through telephonic interviews with open-ended questions directed to the faculties. These faculties' responses in terms of the four aforementioned categories were the following: respecting technology adoption, they expressed that they understood its importance just in emergency moments such as the current one. Furthermore, there was a resistance towards virtual classes; nevertheless, they adopted them. That is why, at that time, they had meetings, guest sessions, faculty development programs and online activities.

Regarding teaching and learning, the different faculties indicated that this lockdown represented a considerable challenge for them; however, they considered that through tools such as Zoom, Skype, Youtube, among others, the classes were really similar to the in-person ones as there was use of PPT, boards, markets and group presentations. Concerning students' engagement, it was declared by the faculties that students' attendance had improved in online sessions, given that there were initiatives that involved them.

Finally, considering faculty' experiences, they expressed that technology was a habit, and they enjoyed teaching in an online manner. For this reason, they suggested that it would be difficult to return to in-person classes having into account that students appreciated the virtual environments.

A second study was executed by Andrew et al. (2020). This project aimed to present the evidence regarding how children were spending their time during the lockdown, focusing on the home learning activities they were carrying out, and on the learning resources available in the families. Moreover, this study illustrated children's experiences regarding home learning and how these experiences varied depending on the different socio-economic realities.

The participants of this study were over 4.000 parents of young students between 4 and 15 years old, belonging to eight different school years from England. In order to carry out this project, the researchers implemented a survey which was completed online by the parents. This survey collected specific information regarding the activities done by the students, the types of home learning tasks, and the resources available at home and those provided by the schools for learning.

The results of this study displayed several key findings regarding the experiences during the lockdown. These findings showed that students were spending about 5 hours per day on home learning; however, children from better-off families spent 30% more time than those from poorer families. On top of that, according to the survey, school closures increased educational inequalities, given that, students that belonged to better-off families had access to more resources for home learning. Finally, many of the parents expressed problems with supporting their children's learning at home.

The third found study that considered education during lockdown was one carried out by Barcelos et al. (2020), in Brazil. Its main focus was analyzing through psychological

aspects how education as well as learners and educators had been affected during and after the pandemic. In this sense, this study had into consideration the consequences of this time regarding people's mental condition. It also contemplated the significance of changing the negative patterns of the pandemic situation into positive opportunities and new strategies or plans to improve the education.

This study suggested that the pandemic and lockdown created feelings such as anxiety and fear, which influenced teaching and learning processes; nevertheless, considering all the aspects that involve humans' brain and based on neurosciences, it was determined that motivation could be a key factor to eliminate the above-mentioned negative feelings and emotions.

The researchers of this project indicated that it is extremely relevant the creation of innovative strategies and methodologies based on scientific arguments to face all the issues associated with education during and after the pandemic time. All the new elements that could be built are a meaningful support to enhance learners and educators relationships.

One study associated with students' participation in EFL classrooms was a qualitative research project executed in 2015 by Caicedo in Colombia. It aimed to identify and describe types of teaching activities; the way students responded to them and the ways the target language was used in the classroom. This study was created following the author's two years observation, which led to the detection that, normally, the use of English in Colombian high schools was not notable; that is why, there was not high participation in the classroom.

Considering the context, this project was carried out at a public high school in the city of Cali, Colombia, where students had English classes three hours per week based on the communicative approach. The participants of this study were 39 teenager students and their teacher.

For conducting this ethnography research, Caicedo adopted nine non-participant

observations, which were collected through recordings and daily field notes. The analysis of the data brought three main categories related to teaching activities, students' participation and language skill aspects.

In regard to the three aforementioned main objectives of this research project, it was encountered that respecting to the first one, 12 teaching activities were developed; they were classified in terms of content presentation and students' comprehension assessment. The second purpose showed that students reacted to the activities in several manners, using both languages, English and Spanish. Lastly, the final aim indicated that the target language was mostly used in input skills (listening and reading) while output skills (speaking and writing) were less contemplated.

Another study related to students' participation was one focused on the Causes for the Low-Participation of Students in the English Lessons. This was a project proposal conducted in 2014 by Ruiz de Erenchun in Pamplona. The main purpose of this study was to identify the causes of low participation taking into account the fields of motivation and attitude in students in the English lessons from a secondary education level in Jaso Ikastola.

The participants of this study were 191 Spanish students of English as a Foreign Language between the ages of 12 and 14 years old from a secondary school, and 13 language teachers who worked in the aforementioned school. For conducting this project, the researcher implemented action research in cooperation with some teachers with the objective of having a better understanding of their educational environment. In order to collect data, this study followed a mixed-method approach which combined both qualitative and quantitative data. The instruments applied were surveys and questionnaires created on Google drive; that is why, the results were collected automatically on the internet.

Respecting the results, this study demonstrated that although the majority of students had a positive attitude regarding English, motivation was one of the factors that affected their

participation. Additionally, many students claimed that self-image, questions asked to the whole group, time to think on what they were going to answer and teachers' perceptions about their participation were other factors that could affect their participation.

The different elements of the above-reported studies, were the starting point to conduct the present research project. They were considered as key information and guides to establish the criteria that were used at the moment of building the methodology and principal tools of collecting data and establishing conclusions.

2. Statement of the problem

Learning a foreign language such as English, which is called “the global language”, has become fundamental to grow professionally, to communicate with people around the world and have more job and study opportunities. As Gou & Beckett (2007) stated “as a global language, English has become a requirement for decent employment, social status and financial security in various parts of the world” (p. 121). Therefore, contextualizing English learning and teaching in Colombia, the Ministry of Education declared that it is crucial for Colombian development that its education includes English language proficiency; given that, the knowledge of the world is normally provided in this language (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, ND).

Bearing the aforementioned, in 1994 English teaching was adopted by The Colombian General Education Act (Ley General de Educación). This law embraced this language in basic (primary), and middle (secondary) education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, ND). In Colombia, English teaching is regulated by a plan called (DBA) Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje, in which it is established the basic knowledge to be acquired in each school grade. This plan is a tool that seeks students to achieve a level of English that allows them to interact, communicate and share their linguistic abilities (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016).

Consequently, these regulations and curriculum suggested by the Colombian Ministry of Education are a considerable support for all public schools and high schools in the country, in which the focus of English teaching and learning must be communicative. On account of this, it was determined the relevance of going into a public high school context and observing how English classes were developed, and what type of interactions existed inside the classroom.

With the aim of approaching an English teaching and learning real context, some previous non-participant observations were conducted, which Creswell (2012) defined “as a process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site” (p. 213). The above-mentioned observations were carried out in a public high school in Rionegro, Antioquia. After analysing the manner in which students interacted, behaved and responded to activities, it was perceived that normally, they did not use English language as a way of participation in the class.

In 2020, in Colombia, it was not viable to contemplate the phenomenon of participation inside the classroom as most governments around the world had temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. (UNESCO, 2020). In this vein, face to face classes were not being carried out, which had brought multiple challenges for the institutions, teachers, students and families, since the education had migrated to virtual and remote environments. Nevertheless, Colombian Ministry of Education had ensured students and families the continuation of the academic processes at home. (Aranda, 2020).

The educational processes were being developed differently depending on the distinct institutions, their population’s context and tools such as technological devices and internet access. In this sense, the public high school in which this project was conducted was working under remote learning. According to O’Neill, “Remote learning, also referred to as distance learning, gives learners who aren’t in a physical location for in-person education, access to online training materials” (2020, Para 4). In the aforementioned institution, English teaching and learning had been implemented through learning guidelines that were designed by the English teachers, this means that the classes were developed asynchronously, and the activities were carried out independently by the students. On top of that, teachers gave

students advice about these guidelines approximately five hours per week through WhatsApp, in which they had the opportunity of solving doubts and expressing impressions.

Considering this “asynchronous teaching and learning”, it was necessary to observe and analyze how students’ participation was presented through the guidelines and advisory sessions, as the pandemic time changed significantly the manner in which that phenomenon, which was participation, was perceived. During the lockdown, participation could not be interpreted as the interaction or the form of involvement in which students can be active expressing their feelings and ideas by asking, answering questions and participating in discussions (Simanjalam, 2008). Alternatively, it was associated with students’ development and presentation of the distinct activities that were proposed in the guidelines, as well as the announcement of their doubts, perspectives or opinions towards them in the advisory sessions.

Along these lines, this research project aimed to identify the factors that influenced the participation of a group of tenth grade students in the different activities proposed in the English guidelines, as well as their interaction in terms of the advisory sessions through WhatsApp.

Contemplating the context of this research study, it is conceivable to mention that linguistic, social and affective factors were its spotlight. Firstly, linguistic factors were associated with the possible participants’ difficulties in the development of the guidelines in terms of the principal English components, which are: morphology, grammar, semantics, pragmatics and phonology. In this spirit, it was appropriate to highlight that according to the Switzerland company Education First (EF), Colombia’s general English proficiency is considered as an unstable one (Alsema, 2016).

Secondly, the possibility that students had to continue learning at home related largely to the resources and support available in each family (Bayrakdark & Guveli, 2020). In

this vein, students' participation could be affected by the social realities they lived at home. Lastly, according to Morpeth & Nicholls (2020) "staying motivated is essential for all students, but even more vital when they are working from home without physically being in the classroom" (para 10). Thus, at that time, learners required a strengthening of the effort they dedicated to their assignments; that is why, motivation could be connected to the affective factors that influenced students' participation.

3. Research question

What are the factors influencing high school students' participation in an EFL remote learning methodology?

4. Justificación

The conduction of this research project contributed not only to the researchers' learning and professional process, since it was also favorable for the context in which it was executed, the growth as researchers, the foreign language teaching and the educational field.

Respecting the relevance of this study in the context where it was applied, it was strongly considered that its implementation brought a range of benefits for the teacher, students and the institution itself. Firstly, the identification of linguistic, social and affective factors influencing these students' participation could entail the teacher to recognize how her teaching practices and the activities she proposes promoted students' participation within the guidelines, and build a sense of commitment and motivation among them. On top of that, it was a manner of comprehending the reasons why the guidelines were developed in certain ways. It is necessary to keep in mind that, during the lockdown, teachers had the challenge of motivating students to complete their assignments through remote learning (Wexler, 2020.). On top of that, teachers were in charge of contemplating the factors or situations that enriched the learners' process (Kumaravadivelu, 2008).

Secondly, keeping in mind that students had the opportunity of expressing the possible factors that influenced their participation in the guidelines and advisory sessions, it was appropriate for them that both, the institution and the English teacher contemplated these factors and promoted different activities to enhance their participation. It is a well-known fact that during the pandemic situation Colombian institutions adopted methodologies that were declared as convenient according to their populations; nevertheless, it is a benefit for students that these institutions appreciate their arguments towards their probable participation decline. Finally, with the results of this study, the institution could focus on how English practices

were developed in its context, and with this specific population, which led to a possible reconsideration of the plans and procedures they had created in contingency times.

In respect to the process as researchers, this study brought closer to the reality that teachers face, and the relevance that investigation and exploration had in terms of teachers' professional growth. Research provides teachers with elements that allow them to improve their perspectives regarding their teaching process, to understand educational phenomena, and to formulate policies that enhance learning and teaching (Martínez, 2015). In this sense, concerning language learning and teaching, this project could endow and complemented other studies related to students' English participation in remote spaces. On the other hand, it may provide researchers with some basis to recognize how affective, linguistic and social factors could affect English participation, which help them to eliminate these negative patterns in future classes, especially in similar situations such as the pandemic one.

On top of the growth as researchers, this study was also significant for the educational field; following that the possible factors that influenced students' English participation in a remote or distant learning could be associated with the aspects that may cause a reduction of the participation in the other study subjects. This issue implied that the educational field reevaluated the real role and needs of students at that time, and what were the most pertinent manners of preserving their interaction even in that above-mentioned type of learning.

5. Objectives

5.1 *General objective*

To identify the factors that influence students' participation in an EFL remote learning methodology.

5.2 *Specific objectives*

- To determine students' perceptions towards the level of participation in the EFL remote learning methodology.
- To analyze reasons that influence students' participation and non-participation in the EFL remote learning methodology.

6. Conceptual references

Contemplating the principal aim of this research study, which was to identify the factors that influenced students' participation in an EFL remote learning methodology; participation, influencing factors, remote learning and EFL were recognized as fundamental concepts that required to be defined in depth.

6.1 Participation

In the process of learning a foreign language, participation plays a fundamental role, since it is one of the aspects that allows students to acquire and remember information related to the language. According to Susak (2016) "Participation is an important piece in a student's education and the achievement of positive learning outcomes" (p. 16). Moreover, it is important to highlight that without students' participation it is impossible to achieve the desired teaching and learning objectives. (Mesfin, 2014).

In the 2020 and in the Colombian context of education, there were several adjustments in the manner in which the learning process was carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the fact that all schools were temporarily closed, the majority of them adopted a homeschooling methodology in order to continue with the learning practices. According to Ray (2017) "homeschooling is a form of private education that is parent led and home based" (p. 86). However, in the context of this study, homeschooling was developed in a different manner since the students did not have all the necessary resources to work under this methodology.

Thus, students' participation in the advisory sessions was related to the questions, doubts and opinions they presented, and in the guidelines, it had to do with their motivation and autonomous abilities to carry out the assigned activities. Díaz (2014) stated that "autonomy implies taking one's own initiative, in this case, exercising control over the learning process" (p. 57).

6.2 Influencing factors

It is a well-known fact that in the language learning process, participation not only depends on the students' ability to use the language, there are influencing factors that can reduce or increase this participation. In the transition to remote learning, some factors that influenced students' participation in the guidelines were linguistic, affective and social ones.

On one hand, several studies have demonstrated that the Colombian context has a large number of shortcomings respecting students' English level (Mejía, 2016). Following this statement, students' linguistic competences and language proficiency were factors that possibly influenced their participation in the guidelines and advisory sessions.

On the other hand, students' affective conditions were essential factors that determine the levels of participation in the English guidelines as well as in the advisory sessions. Learners' attitude and motivation are important affective categories related to language learning. According to Brown (2007) despite the fact that motivation is not the only determiner of success for a language learner, it provides students with a large number of elements that allow them to achieve competence and autonomy.

Finally, in regard to students' social conditions, Lozano (2020), stated that in Colombia, the lockdown without internet connection had increased inequalities. That is why, the resources and technological devices available at each house were fundamental factors that influenced students' learning process and therefore, their participation in the guidelines and advisory sessions. On top of that, parents and family members played an essential role in terms of supporting this learning process at home (Bayrakdark & Guveli, 2020).

6.3 Remote learning

In the pandemic situation faced by several countries worldwide, the learning process had been forced to transfer to remote learning. In respect to the context of this research project, it resulted indispensable to comprehend how this methodology worked. According to

Ray (2020) “remote learning provides an opportunity for students and teachers to remain connected and engaged with the content while working from their homes” (para. 5).

Nevertheless, it is relevant to highlight that remote learning differs from the virtual learning in which technological devices are used to access the curriculum outside of the classroom (Ray, 2020).

The Colombian Ministry of Education adopted this methodology in order to continue with the educational process through flexible strategies to be developed at home (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2020). However, taking into account the lack of resources that Colombian students had to carry out their process, especially those from rural areas, it was necessary to contemplate the conditions of students’ homes and territories to discover the most appropriate manners to adapt strategies to their realities (MEN, 2020). Considering these conditions, it is important to mention that the learning process of the participants of this project was implemented through guidelines and advisory sessions. These guidelines were observed and analyzed, and it was perceived that they did not certainly fulfil all their components; for instance, objectives, content, important concepts or assessment. They were limited to activities or questions in which most of the time students needed to choose the correct option to complete them.

Ray indicates that the most significant elements in remote learning are time, communication, technology, and lesson design (2020). In this fashion, in the context where this study was applied, remote learning was not carried out completely as there was an adjustment of it regarding the necessities and tools of students.

6.4 English as a Foreign Language

EFL, the abbreviation for English as a Foreign Language, is the term used to describe the study of English by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the native language. (Nordquist, 2020). Moreover, Gebhard (1996, cited in Rusunnen, 2011) states that

“EFL refers to English as studied by people who live in places where English is not the first language of people who live in the country” (p. 11). In the case of the Colombian context in which about 70 languages are spoken and Spanish is the official in the entire territory, the Ministerio de Educación Nacional adopted the term foreign language to define English, given that it does not correspond to those spoken in the country.

The adoption of English as the main foreign language taught in the country not only had to do with educational matters, it is also related to most broad issues, such as the current process of globalization. According to Mansfield and Poppi (2011) “the worldwide spread of English is just one of the many different developments subsumed under the general phenomenon of globalization” (p. 2). Bearing the antecedent point in mind, the Colombian government considered this foreign language as a part to continue along the path of economic prosperity and globalization. (British Council, 2015).

7. Methodology

As this project intended to identify the factors that influenced teenage students' participation in an EFL class, it sought to follow a qualitative approach, since the researchers aimed to comprehend how participants interpreted their experiences and realities regarding a specific phenomenon, in this case, their participation in the English guidelines and advisory sessions. On top of that, the present study focused on having into consideration these participants' feelings, perceptions, needs and emotions regarding their own processes, and how they constructed their worlds, and what meaning they attributed to their experiences. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this vein, this qualitative research was directed to contemplate the meaning of words and inner aspects rather than numbers (Bryman, 2012).

In respect to the type of research, this study followed a systematization of experiences as it attempted to interpret participants' experiences and practices in terms of their participation in the EFL guidelines and advisory sessions. It is essential to highlight that one of the researchers of this study was accompanying participants' processes as a pre-service teacher. In this vein, both participants and the researcher were experiencing remote learning and English language through guidelines. On top of that, this project focused on interpreting and working inside these participants' realities with the aim of living the spotlight of this project, which was participation. This deepening provided the study with tools to systematize critically and transform those realities. (Jara, 2018). According to Jara (2018) systematizing experiences must be useful for all the people that involve the study or live the experience. In this sense, it is fundamental to contemplate that this project was directed to bring practical conclusions, which could enrich the context where it was conducted.

Bearing the preceding aspects in mind, 9 students belonging to tenth grade of a public high school were the participants of this research study. It was determined to go deep into this kind of school since based on the pandemic situation, in the context of this project, students

and teachers were working under remote learning methodology through guidelines. The criteria to select these participants, as previously mentioned, was that they belonged to an advanced secondary grade, in which the English participation was more noticeable. On top of that, they made part of a public institution focused on remote learning.

The collection of data is a fundamental phase in the conduction of a research project since it is the means to gather the necessary information to achieve the objective of the study. “Data collection is a very important step in conducting research and can influence results significantly” (McMilan & Gogia, 2014, para.1). In order to accomplish the objective of this study, various data collection methods were selected; first of all, during the conduction of this project, a research diary was implemented; secondly, an interview was conducted with the teacher of these EFL learners; and finally, a survey and some telephone calls were carried out with the students.

With the aim of gathering, documenting and writing information regarding situations, participants’ reactions, emotions, opinions, among other aspects related to the study, a research diary was implemented during its conduction. According to Engin (2011) “a researcher diary can be seen as an integral part of the development of the researcher and the construction of research knowledge” (p. 303). In this vein, this diary provided the project with relevant data which was useful to achieve the objectives of this study. On top of that, a research diary allows teachers and researchers to reflect and have a written register of the research process (Engin, 2011). (See appendix A).

In respect to the interview, this method was implemented with the purpose of collecting information regarding the teacher’s opinions about how students’ participation occurs in the development of the guidelines and advisory sessions. Green, Camilli and Elmore (2006) stated that interviews provide the interviewees with a space in which they can express meaning in their own words. This interview was conducted with the teacher, through

a video call meeting using Zoom. First of all, the interviewee received information regarding the purpose of the study, and the objective of her participation in this method to gather information (See appendix B). Then, the researchers informed her all the ethical factors that involved the interview. After that, she was asked about her agreement regarding being part of this data collection method. Moreover, with the aim of collecting detailed information, this interview contained open-ended questions which were recorded, with prior consent, as they were answered by the teacher (See appendix C).

In regard to the survey, Creswell (2012), stated that survey research focuses on describing views, behaviors, characteristics and attitudes of a specific population. That is why, in this research project 1 survey was carried out in order to illustrate students' emotions towards their participation in the English guidelines and advisory sessions. Furthermore, the implementation of this survey sought to know the influence that linguistic, social and affective factors had in terms of students' participation in the guidelines and advisory sessions.

To implement this survey, a google form document was sent to the students with the purpose that they completed multiple choice questions. Additionally, in order to have a deep analysis of the answers and with the aim that students had the opportunity of expressing their opinions without the limitation of the questions, a telephone call was made to complement the information. This survey was responded to by the participants individually and they were named with pseudonyms in order to keep their identity anonymous (See appendix D).

7.1 Ethical considerations

It is fundamental to highlight the ethical factors that were taken into account in the conduction of this project. According to Kumar (2011) "most professions have established an overall code of ethics and also a code of ethics for conducting research in their

respective field” (p. 242). Continuing with this Kumar’s idea, we could say that none one of the participants were obliged to be part of this research project, which was just for academic purposes; in this sense, there was not an economic benefit for the participants, researchers or the institution itself. At the moment of collecting data, the researchers presented a consent form to the participants, this consent included all of the aspects (objective, data collection methods, and our personal information) of this study, and when reporting data, the participants’ identity was not revealed, instead each of them had a pseudonym.

8. Results and discussions

Contemplating that the main purpose of this research project was to identify the factors that influence students' participation in an EFL remote learning methodology, there was a conduction of a research diary, an interview and a survey to collect data.

The research diary was conducted by one of the researchers, who was the English pre-service teacher in the research context and with the group in which this study was implemented. In this diary, the researcher registered mainly the levels of students' participation towards the guidelines delivery as well as their interaction, comments and reactions in the advisory sessions. The analysis of this diary evidenced that students' participation in the guidelines was generally high. Nevertheless, during the advisory sessions, the pre-service teacher, in her diary, indicated that students' participation was totally limited, there was not a significant interaction between students and her, they did not share opinions, comments or perceptions regarding the guidelines. In this fashion, it could be considered that the practice of English language was just presented in the guidelines, but not as an authentic or real communication that could have been fostered in the advisory sessions through conversations or discussions. Brown (2007) pointed out that the principal achievement of language learning is the communicative competence and having the ability of using the language in real contexts.

The interview was implemented with the teacher in charge of teaching English, along with the pre-service teacher, to the group and the participants in which this research project was applied. This data collection method was carried out through a meeting through the platform Zoom, after informing the teacher about the principal purpose of the interview, and the rights she has as participant, the researchers asked her five open-ended questions related to students' participation in the guidelines and advisory sessions. The teacher expressed that in general terms, the participation in the guidelines was active as the majority of students

developed and sent them; nonetheless, she considered that this high “participation” in the guidelines was just because they were a requirement for achieving a grade. In this sense, the teacher contemplated that there was not a conscious development of these guidelines.

Regarding the advisory sessions, the teacher estimated that about 10% of the whole class participated actively, asking questions and giving comments. She indicated that the majority of students remained silent in these sessions, and their participation was extremely unsatisfactory; that is why she believed that English teaching and learning has been considerably affected.

On top of the above-mentioned elements, the teacher suggested that one of the major difficulties she has experienced in terms of English teaching and learning during this current situation and in this institution is the lack of technology resources from students to conduct synchronic classes. She thought that students’ participation could improve remarkably if she and her students could be connected at the same time in a virtual class, and living the language through real interaction and studying new topics.

Considering the survey, one of the researchers, who was the pre-service teacher, made contact with ten students from tenth grade in order to share the main objective, general information of this study, and asked them to be part of this research project by fulfilling a survey and answering a phone call to complement the information provided in the survey. In this part, it is relevant to mention that these students were selected at random and nine out of ten selected accepted to participate. After their agreement, the researchers proceeded to send the survey through whatsapp. This data collection method consisted of 5 multiple-choice questions and it was made in a google form document. Participants' responses were really diverse, the majority of them considered that they had a high participation in the English guidelines and a medium one in the advisory session; however, they also expressed that

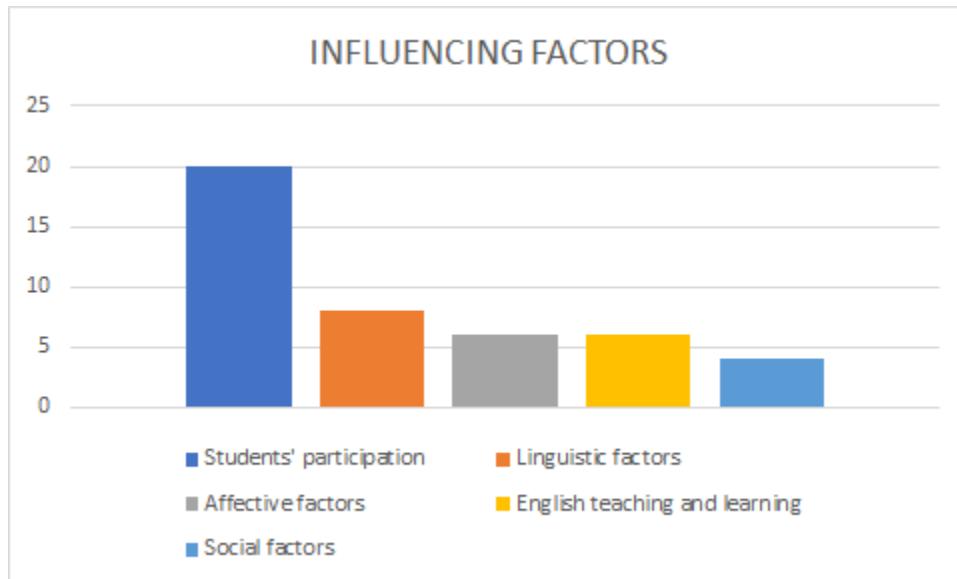
sometimes, their participation had been principally affected by affective factors, in this vein, by lack of motivation.

After the survey was completed by the participants, the phone calls were carried out with the main purposes of complementing and clarifying the information they provided, and listening to their opinions and perspectives regarding their participation in the English guidelines and advisory sessions. These calls were implemented by one of the researchers, seven out of the nine participants were able to receive the call and answer the different questions. In these calls, participants explained the reasons why they chose certain responses in the survey. The researcher received multiple reasons related to the factors that influence their participation in this current situation, in terms of the advisory sessions, most of the participants suggested that they never had doubts towards the guidelines, while others expressed that their lack of this language skills to develop the guidelines has influenced their participation.

The data gathered in the above-mentioned methods were analyzed through the Nvivo program. Nvivo is a software which allows people to analyze data collected in qualitative studies or projects. It helps to manage and organize the information by providing sources and letting users work virtually with research data including surveys, interviews, articles, documents, videos, among others. (Nvivo, 2020)

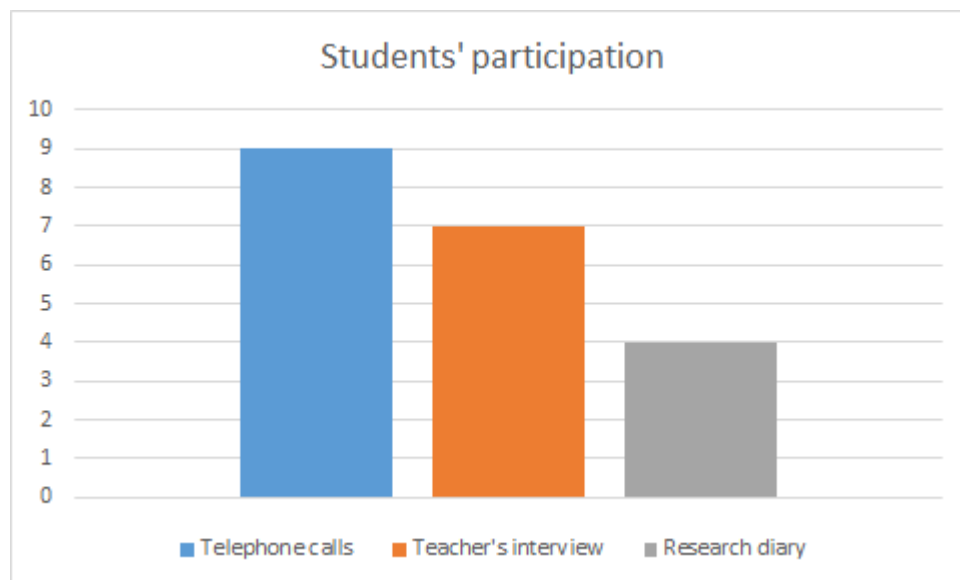
The information collected in the transcription of the teachers' interview, telephone calls, and the research diary carried out by the pre-service teacher, was carefully read and classified in different categories. On one hand, some categories such as linguistic factors, affective factors and social factors were pre-stabilized in the conceptual references. On the other hand, during the analysis, there were two emerging categories. These were students' participation and English teaching and learning. The Nvivo program facilitated this process

of analysis and generated graphs that will be shown in the following paragraphs of this section.



Graph 1. Influencing factors

8.1 Students' participation



Graph 2. Students' participation

The first and more outstanding category that emerged from the analysis of the collected information was students' participation. Although this category was not pre-established as the affective, social and linguistic factors, it had a considerable amount of references during the data analysis, especially from the research diary with a 49.95% which meant that in the information collected, this category had a significant impact and was a prominent factor for the researcher and pre-service teacher. Furthermore, this category was prominent in the teacher's interview with a 19.60% of the total of references, since most of the time, the teacher highlighted the different reasons that led and also influenced students' participation. Lastly, in the analysis of the telephone calls, it was possible to evidence in a 12.07%, participants' opinions and perspectives towards their participation

As mentioned in previous sections, participation occurs when there is presence from students in terms of asking, expressing perceptions and opinions towards different activities or topics. Moreover, the participation is noticeable when students "absorb, seek and apply the skill and knowledge shared in the classroom or other learning activities" (Abdullah et al, 2012, p. 1). Contemplating the information collected through the participants of this research study, it could be stated that although students fulfilled and developed the asynchronous study guidelines, there was not too much interaction, specifically during the synchronous advisory sessions.

According to the information collected in the research diary (RD) carried out by the pre-service teacher, who was one of the researcher of this research project, students from tenth grade had a high participation in the delivery of English guidelines, "los estudiantes del grado décimo tienen una participación alta en el envío de las guías propuestas en el área de inglés" (RD). However, she also declared that sometimes, their participation in the advisory sessions that were carried out through Whatsapp was poor, since there was a lack of interaction in them, "Su participación en las asesorías que se llevan a cabo a través de

Whatsapp son bastante limitadas, no hay interacción” (RD) . One possible cause for this issue could be one that she expressed related to the clarity of the instructions in the guidelines, given that she considered that when the different questions and points were understandable there was not participation in the advisory sessions, “Si existe claridad y especificidad acertada en las instrucciones y preguntas de las diferentes guías no hay participación en las asesorías propuestas” (RD).

The analysis of the teacher 's interview (TI) demonstrated that there was an enormous contrast between students' participation in the guidelines and in the advisory sessions. The teacher in charge of this group pointed out that regarding the guidelines delivery students' participation was high, nevertheless, when interacting and asking questions in the advisory sessions, their participation reduced significantly,

“Hablando de porcentajes, el 90 por ciento de los estudiantes participan, son muy pocos los que no mandan guías, los que no están como pendientes, los que pierden la materia. Porque de entregarlas, la mayoría la entrega, pero de participar en las asesorías, de preguntar, de estar como preguntando aquí de cómo se hace este punto, el porcentaje si es diferente” (TI) .

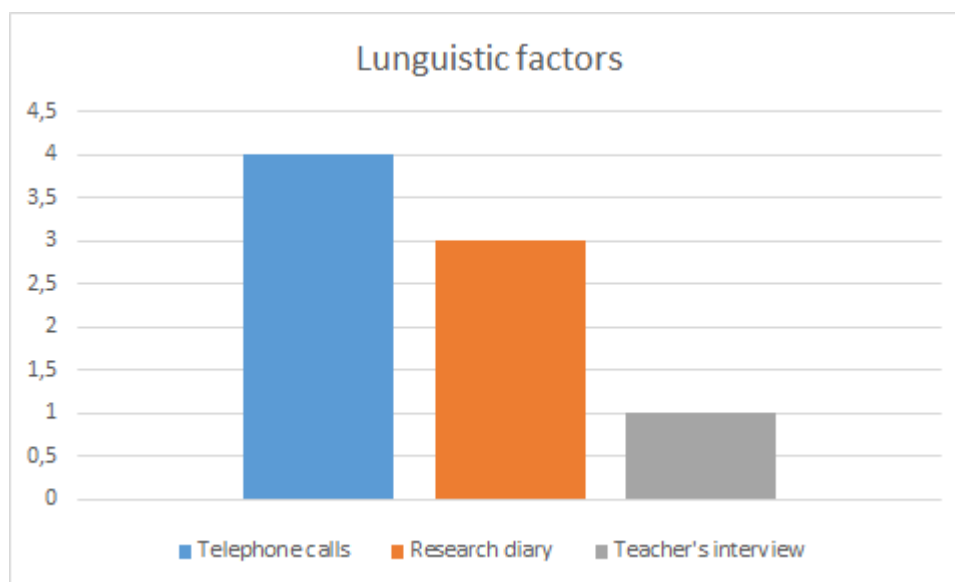
In this vein, it could be possible to state that students' participation was permeated by the responsibility they had with their learning process; given that according to the teacher, students sent the guidelines as a manner of duty; that is why, their participation in the advisory session was unsatisfactory (TI).

Considering the information obtained through the telephone calls, in which participants revealed the reasons for their different levels of participation, it was contemplated that they especially regarded the advisory sessions. They concurred with the teacher in the fact that in the delivery of the English guidelines their participation is active since it had not been influenced or affected by external factors. By contrast, they also coincided that they did not participate in the advisory sessions. To illustrate this idea,

participant 3 expressed that she never participated in the advisory sessions because in the majority of times, she did not have questions, “Entonces por eso yo puse que baja porque la verdad yo nunca participo en las asesorías, pues siempre como que... pues si me hago entender, no es como por nada malo sino que simplemente nunca tengo preguntas”

(Participant 3). Likewise, participant 4 affirmed that she did not like or enjoy participating in English, “la verdad es que a mi casi no me gusta participar” (Participant 4) . According to Herazo (2009) in the foreign language classrooms the promotion of oral interaction and communication has become a priority. In this sense, these participants’ comments revealed how English teaching and learning in this context and pandemic situation had lost, in a considerable manner, real interaction and communication.

8.2 Linguistic factors



Graph 3. Linguistic factors

This category was established in the conceptual references, through the general concept of influencing factors, in which it was defined as students’ English level of proficiency and linguistic competences that influence their participation, especially, in the

English guidelines. This category was mainly focused on feeble students' English abilities to develop the proposed activities, which could negatively influence their learning processes.

After the analysis, it was encountered that this category had eight references, being the telephone calls and the research diary the more influencing information to illustrate linguistic factors. Regarding the research diary, it was pointed out by the pre-service teacher that most of the time students participate in the advisory sessions just to ask for the translations of some words: "los estudiantes participan al momento en que necesitan traducciones o significados de palabras" (RD).

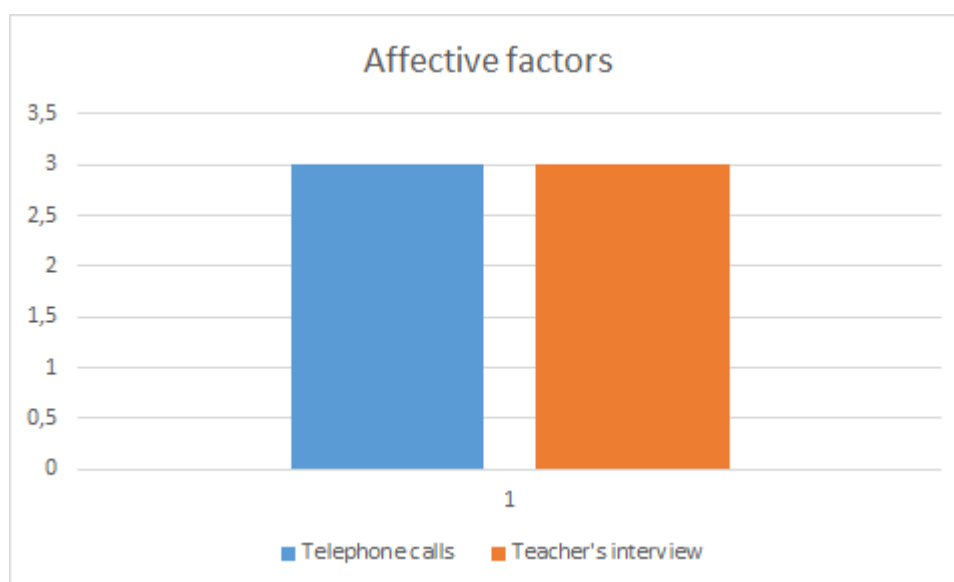
Considering the guidelines and their connection with this category, it was found that there was a significant difference in students' results, while some of them obtained very high outcomes, other ones were extremely inferior (RD). According to a research study conducted in 2013, there are four main factors that cause low English learning; some of them are "students' lack of English foundation background" (Rany et al, 2013). As well as lack of an appropriate curriculum for helping students to improve their proficiency in this language. In this fashion, it is fundamental to contemplate that in the pandemic situation most students demanded more autonomy to move forward their educational processes. Moreover, the majority of institutions had to build their curriculums or contents in an improvised manner to study and teach from home; that is why, an absence of previous English knowledge and non-contextualized activities could affect in a crucial form students' linguistic aspects.

Students responses from the telephone calls displayed how some English linguistic aspects affect their participation in both, the guidelines and the advisory sessions. At the moment of asking for the English level of participation, participant 2 indicated that sometimes he did not participate because of his English level of proficiency since he considered this language as a challenging one.

“Pero pues así como que no veo la necesidad y tampoco es que sea así super bilingüe pues. A mi a veces se me dificulta mucho el inglés... o sea mucho no, se me dificulta, o sea no es que sea muy teso para eso. Pero no, no sé no, casi no participo” (Participant 2).

This participant’s response demonstrated how the interaction and participation in this language has been influenced by lack of competences to communicate possible ideas or questions. Participant 4 and participant 6 also declared that they perceived English as a complicated and strenuous subject; for these reasons, they did not have a high participation in it. These factors associated with students’ linguistic conditions could lead to a creation of “unconfidence to use English because they are afraid of mistakes and shy feeling” (Rany et al, 2013).

8.3 Affective factors



Graph 4. Affective factors

The third category with more references in the analysis was affective factors. It had a total of six references which were mostly found in the interview carried out with the teacher, the phone calls made with the students, and the survey in which 33,3 % of the students expressed that the lack of motivation affected their participation in the English guidelines and in the advisory sessions. The predominant and the most mentioned aspects in this category

were motivation and the influence that the current pandemic situation had in terms of participation in the activities proposed by the teacher.

As it was set out in the conceptual references, the affective factors can increase or reduce students' participation. Considering the responses given by the participants of this study, the lack of motivation influenced significantly, the participation in the asynchronous English guidelines as well as in the synchronous advisory sessions. In the teacher's interview, it was stated that this lack of motivation was related with the disposition that students had to raise early in the morning to ask questions and clarify doubts during the advisory sessions. “la pereza que le da a los muchachos de levantarse temprano y estar disponibles de 8 a 1 para hacer preguntas durante las asesorías”(TI). Additionally, it was pointed out that numerous students were not interested in the advisory sessions, but in sending the asynchronous guidelines in order to get the necessary grades. “muchos estudiantes no son muy interesados en el momento de la asesoría, sino que se interesan más por entregar que por estar pendientes de la asesoría” (TI).

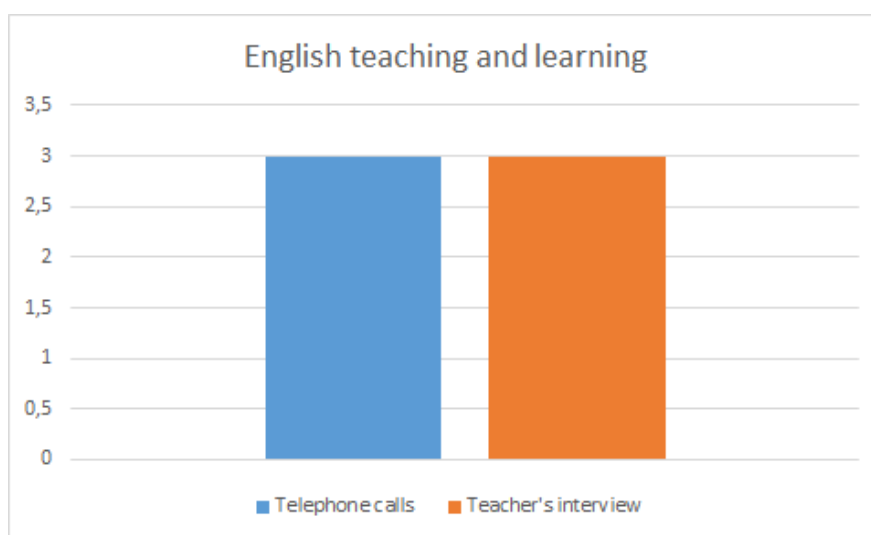
On top of the aforementioned responses, in the interview, the teacher expressed that the pandemic time impacted students' motivation and participation. She stated that they sent the guidelines just to meet the requirements. “Es como la motivación también. Entregan, cumplen, pero no están muy motivados, pues con todo este tema de la pandemia”(TI). These teacher's comments reflect how students' affective conditions, especially the motivation, influenced their participation. Likewise, Tasgin and Tunc (2018) affirmed that “If the students are motivated for learning, they participate actively in activities” (p. 58). In this vein, the answers provided in the interview demonstrate the impact that motivation and the lockdown had in terms of students' participation.

In addition to the teachers' perspectives, the information collected in the telephone calls showed several similarities among the responses provided by the students and the

teacher. Students indicated that the lack of motivation had an impact in their participation. Participant 6 affirmed that she always needed to look for help to carry out the English guidelines, since she did not have the necessary abilities to do it, and that aspect affected her motivation “siempre me toca pedir ayuda o algo así porque la verdad no soy para nada buena en el inglés entonces como que eso no me motiva tanto a desarrollar las guías”. Moreover, participant 2 expressed that due to the pandemic situation, the learning process became tedious “debido a la situación, ya son varios meses estudiando así y aburre un poco”. The fact that students had to adapt to a new learning methodology caused that several of them felt apathy or lack of motivation towards study (Porres, 2020).

Furthermore, participant 4 concurred with the teacher’s opinion regarding the low students’ interaction during the advisory sessions. This participant mentioned that she did not feel the desire to ask questions “que a la hora de preguntar, yo no sé... uno como que no”. In this way, these participants’ responses and opinions illustrated the influence that affective factors, such as motivation and the pandemic situation had in their level of participation in the asynchronous English guidelines and in the synchronous advisory sessions.

8.4 English teaching and learning



Graph 5. English teaching and learning

English teaching and learning was an emerging category with six references in the analysis. These references were found in the teacher's interview (TI) and the telephone calls conducted after the survey. On one hand, during the conduction of the telephone calls, students coincided with their opinions regarding the manner in which the English was taught and the way in which guidelines were designed. According to participant 1 the guidelines were in accordance with their age and the topics learned with the teacher "las guías en sí son buenas, pues de acuerdo a nuestra edad y lo que hemos practicado con la profesora". Similarly, participant 6 manifested that the topics contained in the guidelines were easy to work with "no pues la verdad los temas han sido muy buenos y fáciles de manejar". These students' responses indicated that the contents included in the English guidelines was not a factor that influenced their participation.

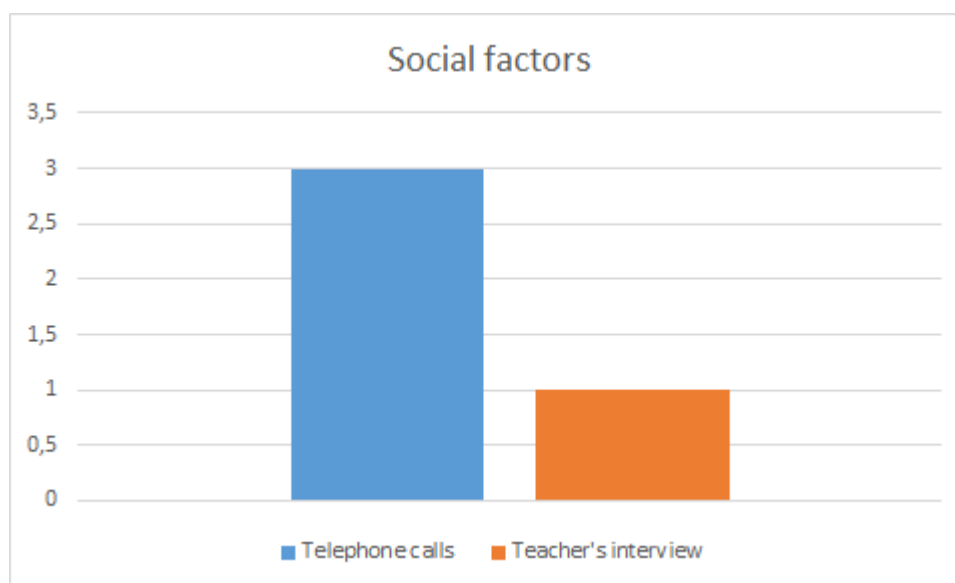
Despite the fact that the English teaching and learning process was carried out asynchronously, as it was mentioned previously, the students had the space of the advisory sessions to clarify possible doubts regarding the asynchronous guidelines. Participant 2 supported this with his answer. He mentioned that they had a WhatsApp group in which they could ask questions and solve their doubts in a scheduled time. "Nosotros tenemos un grupo y pues ahí hacemos preguntas o al interno también las podemos hacer y si tenemos alguna duda o inconveniente con la guía pues en el momento planteamos las preguntas y las resolvemos". However, it was evidenced that they did not have a high level of participation during these sessions. Likewise, in the teacher's interview, it was stated that the guidelines were designed in an understandable manner. She declared that she considered that the guidelines were properly structured so that they understood what they had to do. "Yo considero primero, las guías son bien estructuradas, de manera que ellos entiendan qué es lo que tienen que hacer".

On the other hand, bearing in mind the conditions in which the English classes were implemented due to the pandemic, it is possible to affirm that the lack of resources

significantly influenced the English teaching and learning processes (Abadía, 2020). The teacher illustrated this idea expressing that she did not feel that they were progressing or acquiring new knowledge, but rather reinforcing and doing what they could. “Yo no siento que estemos avanzando, sino más bien como reforzando y haciendo lo que podemos. Moreover, she expounded that in the manner they were working, there was a little progress; they were more focused on repeating, practicing and reviewing. “Desde lo que estamos manejando nosotros, en realidad es poco lo que se avanza, es más lo que se repite, lo que se practica, lo que se refuerza”.

The aforementioned participant’s responses exposed that although the English guidelines were designed with clear instructions in order to provide the students with the contents in a comprehensible manner, there were some factors that influenced English teaching and learning. However, the analysis of this category revealed that the manner in which English was taught was not a factor that affected students’ participation.

8.5 Social factors



Graph 6. Social factors

Social factors was the fewest referenced category. It got a total of four references that were found in the information collected in the telephone calls and the teacher’s interview.

This category was established in the conceptual references section, and it was related to the resources and technological devices available at students' places.

The responses provided by the participants indicated that the access to the internet connection was an issue that influenced the English teaching and learning processes. In the interview, it was stated by the teacher that in her opinion the learning and teaching processes would have been less complicated if they could connect to video calls and had synchronous classes. However, the access that students had to the cell phones, computers and the internet did not allow it. "sería fácil si nosotros nos pudiéramos conectar por videollamada, tener la clase como la tienen muchos de los colegios. Pero no nos permite el acceso que tienen los chicos al internet, a los computadores, a los celulares". On top of that, and to support this idea, in Colombia more than 90% of high school students do not have access to computers or the internet in their houses (El espectador, 2020). The teacher also affirmed that in some cases students had a sole cellphone per house and that fact did not allow to carry out the process adequately. "A veces hay en un solo celular por familia y son varios estudiantes. Yo creo que eso no permite llevar el proceso bien a cabo".

In this category it is important to highlight that based on students' responses, it was evidenced that social factors were not elements that had a significant influence in students' participation. Participant 1 illustrated this idea with his response. He mentioned that he could not send one of the six asynchronous guidelines worked since he had issues with his e-mail. "en este momento llevamos 6 guías y no más falté por una que fue porque el correo como que estaba fallando entonces estaba rebotando mucho". Similarly, participant 1 indicated that he was in a different town and he did not have an internet connection to participate. "yo no me encontraba en la casa, yo me encontraba en un pueblito entonces estaba mal de internet, entonces casi no pude participar". In this vein, students' comments revealed that the social

factors did not have a significant influence on their participation in the asynchronous English guidelines and in the synchronous advisory sessions.

9. Conclusions

These were the most crucial conclusions that arose after the analysis and discussion of the results and data collected, having as a principal consideration, the question, general and specific objectives of the present research study.

In the Colombian context, especially in public high schools, it is common to find issues related to students' participation in EFL classes. One aspect that influenced significantly this phenomenon was the pandemic situation and the remote learning methodology. In educational contexts where synchronous classes were not being carried out, as the one in which this research project was applied, it was notable how English teaching and learning became a mechanical process that was merely focused on reviewing previous topics through guidelines, which after being analyzed, it was noticed that their real spotlight was workshops since as mentioned in a previous section, these "guidelines" did not certainly fulfil all their components; for instance, objectives, content, important concepts or assessment.

On top of the aforementioned, and despite the fact that students had the possibility of giving opinions, asking questions, or solving doubts through advisory sessions, it was evidenced that most of the time students did not interact or participate in those spaces. In this vein, as it was mentioned in the results section, students' participation was mainly demonstrated when sending the English guidelines to the teacher, just as a manner of requirement.

It is also relevant to highlight that all the above-mentioned situations and facts had a considerable background. On one hand, one of the principal factors that influenced students' participation in a EFL remote learning methodology were the linguistic ones as it was perceived how the lack of English proficiency from students did not allow them to interact and participate during the advisory sessions. Participants did not feel confident to express

doubts or ideas due to their English level. That is why; this weak participation led to some low marks in the different guidelines.

Additionally, another factor that influenced students' participation was their affective conditions, especially their motivation. Due to the pandemic situation and the distance learning, students did not feel motivated to participate in the synchronous advisory sessions and in the asynchronous English guidelines. Based on their perceptions and responses, it was possible to determine that their motivation affected the level of participation in the EFL remote learning methodology.

On the other hand, the manner in which the English subject was taught and the asynchronous English guidelines were developed were not factors that influenced students' participation. The contents included in the guidelines allowed students to carry out and participate in all the activities proposed therein. However, this asynchronous strategy affected the English teaching and learning processes, since it was not possible to delve deeper into the topics or even introduce new ones.

Furthermore, despite the fact that the social conditions had been considered as an influential factor in students' participation. Their social realities did not affect their participation in the asynchronous English guidelines and in the synchronous advisory sessions. In this vein, students had the necessary resources in their places to send the guidelines and be part of the activities.

The present study had some limitations which were potentially related to the literature review and the communication or contact with participants. On one hand, it was effortful to find studies associated with the pandemic or remote learning and their relationship or influence towards English teaching and learning, as it was a new situation for every country, and mainly for the educational field. On the other hand, as a consequence of the lockdown and lack of tools for communicating, it was difficult to contact the participants, the majority

of them responded to the survey. However, few of them answered the telephone calls, which affected the collection of crucial information, since in them participants could express their perspectives and opinions regarding their participation.

This study could contribute significantly to future research projects that have as a preeminent point students' participation in an EFL remote learning methodology or in a situation similar to the pandemic one, in which students were forced to study from home. It is suggested for future research to have into consideration that the information respecting this phenomenon, participation, in a pandemic time could be challenging to find. In this vein, it is recommended to search reliable and well-grounded data. On top of that, in the conduction of projects similar to the present one, it will be fundamental to establish data collection methods that are suitable for the context and the participants that are involved in them.

Finally, this research study indeed displayed its relevance as for the educational field. Its results revealed how the current situation influenced and also affected some learning and teaching processes, specifically in EFL. These findings were significant to comprehend the reasons of students' level of participation from a remote methodology, and the importance of designing and establishing contextualized plans for future similar circumstances, where factors such as motivation, lack of resources and low proficiency are not the spotlight.

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10. Appendixes

Appendix A. Research diary

RESEARCH DIARY		
FECHA	PARTICIPACIÓN EN INTERACCIÓN EN LAS ASESORÍAS	PARTICIPACIÓN EN LAS GUÍAS
Agosto 25, 2020	La participación de los estudiantes del grado décimo las asesorías que se llevan a cabo a través de Whatsapp son bastante limitadas, no hay interacción. Los estudiantes participan cuando en las guías hay preguntas subjetivas o difíciles para ellos.	Los estudiantes del grado décimo tienen una participación alta en el envío de las guías propuestas en el área de inglés.

Septiembre 14, 2020	Los estudiantes del grado décimo participan y hacen preguntas al momento en que necesitan traducciones o significados de palabras para así poder realizar las guías	
Septiembre 21, 2020	Si existe claridad y especificidad acertada en las instrucciones y preguntas de las diferentes guías no hay participación en las asesorías propuestas.	

Octubre 2, 2020

En la calificación de las guías se puede observar que, de un total de 30 estudiantes, alrededor de 20 personas realizan el envío de las guías a tiempo. Por otro lado, respecto a la nota adquirida esta varía de gran manera. Algunos obtienen resultados altos mientras que otros consiguen resultados bastante precarios. Aproximadamente 8 estudiantes en la guía número 6 obtuvieron resultados menores a 3.5

Appendix B. Consent form teacher's interview



CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Esta entrevista hace parte de nuestro proyecto de investigación, el cual tiene por objetivo identificar los factores que influyen la participación de los estudiantes en el aprendizaje de inglés desde una metodología remota. En esta pretendemos conocer sus perspectivas y opiniones como docente con respecto a la participación de los estudiantes en las diferentes guías propuestas para el área de inglés. Cabe resaltar que los datos recolectados en esta entrevista serán utilizados específicamente para fines académicos y su identidad no será revelada al momento de presentar los hallazgos de esta investigación.

Esta entrevista consta de cinco preguntas abiertas y cabe resaltar que si en algún momento se siente incómoda con alguna pregunta, no dude en informarnos e inmediatamente pasaremos a la siguiente. Adicionalmente, la llamada será grabada con el único propósito de preservar la información recolectada.

De antemano muchas gracias. ¿Está usted de acuerdo con hacer parte de esta entrevista?

Appendix C. Teacher's interview questions

1. ¿Cómo percibe el nivel de participación de los estudiantes en el desarrollo de las guías de inglés?
2. ¿Qué situaciones exponen los estudiantes cuando no participan en el desarrollo de las guías?
4. Desde su punto de vista ¿qué factores afectan la participación de los estudiantes en el desarrollo de las guías de inglés?
5. ¿Cómo percibe la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés desde la actual metodología remota?

FACTORES QUE INFLUENCIAN LA PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS ESTUDIANTES EN EL APRENDIZAJE DE INGLÉS DESDE UNA METODOLOGÍA REMOTA

Por favor lee la siguiente información en acompañamiento de tu acudiente. Por medio de la siguiente encuesta, pretendemos conocer sus diferentes perspectivas, sentimientos y emociones al momento de participar en las diferentes guías correspondientes al área de inglés.

Esta encuesta hace parte de un proyecto de investigación, el cual tiene como objetivo identificar los factores que influyen la participación de los estudiantes en las guías de inglés. La información y los resultados recolectados en esta encuesta serán totalmente confidenciales y usados específicamente con fines académicos. Además, su identidad no será revelada al momento de presentar los hallazgos.

***Obligatorio**

¿Acepta hacer parte de este proyecto de investigación? *

Acepto

Siguiente

Perspectivas y opiniones acerca de la participación en las guías de inglés

1. Nombre completo *

Tu respuesta

2. Elige un seudónimo *

Tu respuesta

3. ¿Cómo consideras que es tu participación en las guías propuestas para el área de inglés? *

Alta

Media

Baja

Nula

4. Consideras que tu participación en las guías de inglés se ha visto influenciada por: (puedes elegir más de una opción) *

- Falta de motivación para desarrollarlas
- Falta de dispositivos tecnológicos
- Falta de acceso a Internet
- Grado de dificultad para desarrollarlas
- La participación no se ha visto influenciada
- Otro

5. ¿Cómo consideras que es tu participación en las asesorías correspondientes al área de inglés?

- Alta
- Media
- Baja
- Nula

Atrás

Enviar