Ensuring Teaching Continuity: Chilean University Students' Perception on Remote Teaching of English during COVID 19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The objective of our study is to know the perception of Chilean university students toward the pedagogical methodologies in online English classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. We applied a questionnaire (built by fifteen experts, validated through a pilot test of 34 students, and improved with licensed 21.0 version SPSS in terms of consistency) to 341 students from different university programs. We analyzed the responses quantitatively and qualitatively and found out that 75% of the 341 students surveyed have shown agreement with the pedagogical methodologies applied in online classes and motivation in learning due to the permanent concern and communication of the teacher in charge. Besides, the students have also yielded satisfactory learning outcomes. These results reveal that the online English teaching of Chilean higher education during the pandemic has been good and indirectly show the willingness of Chilean university teachers to receive relevant and continuous training to deliver quality education. In 2022, many countries have returned to face-to-face classes, but we believe that the pedagogical methodologies used in this research could serve as a reference for teachers or researchers worldwide who wish to incorporate into their face-to-face classes a part of online teaching and do research on online English teaching.

Keywords: online learning & teaching of English, COVID-19 pandemic, university students, students' self-assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has generated crises in different areas. And in the sphere of education, it caused "massive closure of educational institutions in more than 190 countries", leaving "in mid-May 2020 more than 1,200 million students of all levels of education" without face-to-face classes (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)– UNESCO, 2020, p.1). Therefore, in this respect, universities had to opt for remote education (Sugianto & Ulfah, 2020; Triana & Nugroho, 2021) to prevent the spread of viruses and protect the integrity of the educational community personnel during the pandemic.

According to González et al. (2020), the problem with confinement has jeopardized the learning, the teaching strategies, and the assessment processes, as they cannot remain face-to-face (Hermansyah & Aridah, 2021). However, most educational institutions have long been accustomed to face-to-face teaching, and the teachers have also received training to work in this modality (Rahmawati, Fauziati & Marmanto, 2021). Therefore, to adapt to this context and redesign the teaching 100% remotely is a challenge (Sugianto & Ulfah, 2020) that implies a "change of organizational character" (Ibáñez et al., 2018, p.2) to "combine their traditional procedures with their new non-face-to-face requirements" (García-Peñalvo, 2020, p. 1). In this sense, it is vital for teachers, students, and even parents and guardians to quickly acquire relevant competence and skills, such as knowledge related to digital teaching-learning that diminishes the negative impact on the students during this transition from face-to-face classes to online classes (Amiruddin & Jannah, 2021; König et al., 2020; Triana & Nugroho, 2021; Rahmawati, Fauziati & Marmanto, 2021).

Long before the pandemic, in the field of teaching and learning English, the incorporation of technology into the English classroom has become a supplementary means to enrich the vocabulary knowledge of students (Ayalew, 2019) and an aid to "improve their grammatical competence" (Pinto-Llorente, Sánchez-Gómez, García-Peñalvo & Casillas-Martin, 2017, p. 10) and "written and oral skills, as well as pronunciation in English" (p. 2). According to Porpiglia et al. (2020), "the new digital platforms now available allow advanced virtual integration among users, giving opportunities for exchange of remote information" (p. 2). Through videoconferences in real-time, students, without having to leave home, can participate and consult in class; moreover, just by replaying the class video, they can review the class content as many times as they want. In this sense, when combining the teaching and learning of English with the appropriate digital technologies and guidance from the teacher, students can formulate what they think and express it accurately and fluently in English.

Therefore, we propose to carry out an analytical study to answer the following research question:

- What perception and learning outcomes do Chilean university students have with remote English teaching during the COVID 19 pandemic?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the insecurities associated with public health and the need to educate young people and children during the COVID-19 pandemic, governments have enacted policies and

measures to address them. According to UNESCO (2020b), the Chilean government has carried out public policies on (1) digital platforms, (2) teacher education and training, and (3) digital content, which significantly supports the continuity of Chilean university teaching activity. Point (3), in particular, is a critical factor in strengthening and specifying innovation and digitization for the practice of ubiquitous or mobile learning in education, especially for higher education. On the other hand, to collaborate uninterruptedly with students learning around the world during this period, UNESCO (2020a) has given some guidelines (see table 1) which regulate online teaching to reduce negative impacts during the transition from face-to-face to virtual classes.

Table 1 10 UNESCO recommendations for not interrupting learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

1	**Examine the readiness and choose the most relevant tools.** Decide on the use high-technology and low-technology solutions based on the reliability of local power supplies, internet connectivity, and digital skills of teachers and students. This could range through integrated digital learning platforms, video lessons, MOOCs, to broadcasting through radios and TVs.
2	**Ensure inclusion of the distance learning programmes.** Implement measures to ensure that students including those with disabilities or from low-income backgrounds have access to distance learning programmes, if only a limited number of them have access to digital devices. Consider temporarily decentralizing such devices from computer labs to families and support them with internet connectivity.
3	**Protect data privacy and data security.** Assess data security when uploading data or educational resources to web spaces, as well as when sharing them with other organizations or individuals. Ensure that the use of applications and platforms does not violate students' data privacy.
4	**Prioritize solutions to address psychosocial challenges before teaching.** Mobilize available tools to connect schools, parents, teachers and students with each other. Create communities to ensure regular human interactions, enable social caring measures, and address possible psychosocial challenges that students may face when they are isolated.
5	**Plan the study schedule of the distance learning programmes.** Organize discussions with stakeholders to examine the possible duration of school closures and decide whether the distance learning programme should focus on teaching new knowledge or enhance students' knowledge of prior lessons. Plan the schedule depending on the situation of the affected zones, level of studies, needs of student's needs, and availability of parents. Choose the appropriate learning methodologies based on the status of school closures and home-based quarantines. Avoid learning methodologies that require face-to-face communication.
6	**Provide support to teachers and parents on the use of digital tools.** Organize brief training or orientation sessions for teachers and parents as well, if monitoring and facilitation are needed. Help teachers to prepare the basic settings such as solutions to the use of internet data if they are required to provide live streaming of lessons.
7	**Blend appropriate approaches and limit the number of applications and platforms.** Blend tools or media that are available for most students, both for synchronous communication and lessons, and for asynchronous learning. Avoid overloading students and parents by asking them to download and test too many applications or platforms.
8	**Develop distance learning rules and monitor students' learning process.** Define the rules with parents and students on distance learning. Design formative questions, tests, or exercises to monitor closely students' learning process. Try to use tools to support submission of students' feedback and avoid overloading parents by requesting them to scan and send students' feedback.
9	**Define the duration of distance learning units based on students' self-regulation skills.** Keep a coherent timing according to the level of the students' self-regulation and metacognitive abilities

	especially for livestreaming classes. Preferably, the unit for primary school students should not be more than 20 minutes, and no longer than 40 minutes for secondary school students.
	Create communities and enhance connection.
10	Create communities of teachers, parents and school managers to address sense of loneliness or helplessness, facilitate sharing of experience and discussion on coping strategies when facing learning difficulties.

Source: UNESCO (2020a)

These guidelines bring together what UNESCO cares about and what it tries to address, mainly concerning the following crucial aspects of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT): (a) apply appropriate technological tools (items 1, 2, 3, and 7), (b) take into account the needs and characteristics in learning (items 4, 5, 9, and 10), and (c) deliver training and conduct timely follow-up and monitoring (items 6 and 8). Following these guidelines in giving remote instruction could have a favorable effect. When teachers know how to apply appropriate technological tools, use all the tools of the educational platform, do timely follow-ups, and pay special attention to their student's needs for learning the content, they can create a virtual classroom environment similar to the face-to-face one. Namely, in the ERT context, the teachers can still monitor students' learning, help them achieve the minimum requirement of the curriculum, and direct them toward developing the competencies and skills of the subject. In this way, the teachers can help reduce the short, medium, and long-term negative impact of the pandemic on students' online learning (Table 2).

Table 2 Predictable short-, medium-, and long-term impact of the pandemic on college students

	Personal adjustment to daily life.
1	Travelling back home to adjust to a situation of confinement. Isolation, the loss of social contact and socialization routines.
	Financial costs and burdens.
2	Students and their families will have to continue to bear the costs associated with their higher education (educational loan, rental, among others).
	Job prospects of new graduates.
3	Graduate in 2020 or even 2021 will find themselves having to face the payment of their loans and university credits, in a depressed labor market because of the crisis.
	The replacement of face-to-face classes.
4	There is still a huge digital divide (especially in Africa (17%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (45%)); it would be very risky to assume that all students have efficient connectivity in their homes.
	International mobility.
5	Since late February 2020, travel restrictions to various locations, including China, Iran, South Korea, and Italy, and later Argentina, Brazil, Spain, Panama, and Venezuela, to name but a few, have impeded the flow of international students around the world.

Source: UNESCO (2020b)

University teachers can carry out their lessons and assessments amid the pandemic through online classes, yet, it is still necessary to review how efficient they have been for students' learning. For this, Lumina-Gallup (2020) surveyed university students around the question: How likely is it that the COVID-19 pandemic will negatively affect your ability to

complete the degree? 32% out of 3941 students answered [probable] and 17% answered [very probable]. Aristovnik, Keržič, Ravšelj, Tomaževič & Umek (2020) surveyed 23,986 undergraduate students from six continents, 35% stated that they had more difficulty concentrating in online classes than the face-to-face ones. In this line, González et al. (2020) attributed the reduction in the efficiency of online lessons to isolated study, students' lack of self-regulated learning abilities, and an inappropriate environment for learning (having to share space and internet connection with other brothers, deal with noises coming from the neighbors, etc.). Moreover, not having timely help to clarify their doubts, pending tasks would pile up, generating an ever more stressful feeling of overload that puts study at risk.

Putra et.al (2020) add that students at this time tend to encounter the following situations that impede the optimal development of distance learning activities:

(1) Difficulties adapting to ever-changing school and university administration procedures,
(2) Obstacles to meeting the requirements and expectations of each academic subject before the end of the evaluation period,
(3) Family financial difficulty to provide technological tools to participate in online classes, and
(4) Lack of technical guidance and timely and effective supervision during the learning process.

Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) explored the challenges and opportunities of remote teaching by contemplating the teaching internship experiences of 27 Chilean future EFL teachers who were doing their pre-service internships during the pandemic, following the practical guidelines on the instruction for traditional classes. The findings suggest that despite the opportunity to discover and learn new technologies, the eventual challenges outweighed the overall benefits. The lack of previous experiences in virtual education and other causes could have directly contributed to making this experience more frustrating.

Huang et al. (2021) interviewed 101 Chinese university students to measure their engagement level and online learning experience in the university English course. The study revealed that although students had more opportunities for interaction with their instructor and peers, the collaboration between students was limited. Other drawbacks were: one of the implemented platforms was designed only for cell phones, making it difficult to use the laptop, the platforms break down when the Internet is not stable and are sometimes overloaded, and, finally, for teachers, it was hard to ensure concentration and student behavior.

Kamal et al. (2021) applied a survey to 103 university students in Abu Dhabi and Moscow to examine the effect of changes in the educational process regarding cognitive skills and academic performance in learning English during the pandemic. The study confirmed that distance learning of English is more effective than traditional face-to-face education; the previous has increased students' time for self-directed study in the most comfortable environment (without strict control by teachers and without the need to go to university), and it has favored their learning.

Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) surveyed 153 ESL college students and 41 teachers in the United States to discover how the pandemic has affected their teaching and learning.

Many of the surveyed students, alongside the teachers, have expressed that their stress has increased during this period. In addition, they also recognized that a variety of contexts prevented them from carrying out the teaching and learning process correspondingly. Another situation has, above all, adversely jeopardized the students' development of verbal communicative skills; since not going to the university meant fewer opportunities to speak English in and out of the classroom. As a particular matter, even though the ERT helped students continue studying, the authors concluded that the pandemic period triggered some detrimental effects that undermined the student's ESL learning.

Díaz-Arce and Loyola-Illescas (2021) stated that the technological divide was not an impediment for Chilean students to take their online classes. Since, according to the national census carried out before the pandemic, more than 80% of Chilean households declared they had internet access, and more than 90% had smartphones. In other words, in recent years, the access and use of mobile devices and the Internet have become commonplace for Chilean households, so the impact and inequality generated by the "digital divide" (Dwivedi et al. 2020) for Chilean students in online classes should be less. From this perspective, to guarantee the quality of remote university education and learning during the pandemic, it is necessary to enhance the teaching and learning process, strengthening the following online classroom learning components (table 3) with relevant intervention strategies.

Table 3 Online class learning components that require improvement

N°	Learning component	Author(s)
1	Strengthen the feedback loop to verify and affirm student understanding.	D. Clow (2012)
2	Reduce the problem of dropping out of the subject.	Dodge, Whitmer, & Frazee (2015)
3	Improve the participation, commitment and academic motivation of students.	Wise (2014); Wise, Zhao & Hausknecht (2014); Yen, Liu, Froissard, Richards & Atif (2015); Lonn, Aguilar &. Teasley (2015)
4	Improve student learning performance.	Wu, Huang & Zou (2015); Smith, Lange & Huston (2012)
5	Improve students' cognitive retention.	Bakharia et al. (2016); Rienties et al. (2016); Arnold, Pistilli & Arnold (2012)
6	Improve collaborative learning.	Harrer & Göhnert (2015)

Source: Na & Tasir (2017)

Regarding how to improve these six learning components, the authors suggested implementing the following strategies.

For components 1, 2, and 3: Senior et al. (2018) and Hill and Fitzgerald (2020) found that allowing students to share their opinions through blog posts, using learning management systems (LMS) such as Blackboard and Moodle to create and participate in discussion forums, and providing them timely feedback could improve students' engagement levels. On the other hand, Dyment et al. (2020) indicated that students' commitment to the online classes strengthens with summative evaluation and teacher-assisted dynamic activities.

For components 4 and 5: Ledermüller and Fallmann (2017) recommend guiding students with the self-regulated learning model, which is composed of three phases:

(1) Forethought: hierarchically define the learning goals that motivate the students to achieve them with self-efficacy.

(2) Performance/volitional control: define the cognitive strategies or techniques to be used (memorization, critical thinking, and elaboration) and, besides, plan to monitor one's performance and devise remedial measures.

(3) Self-reflection: compare their results with a series of standardized objectives. In case of failure, they can understand the reasons for the non-fulfillment of goals and seek new strategies to improve the results.

This model seeks to increase students' self-efficacy level, allowing them to assume greater responsibility and commitment to their learning and, in case of poor performance, promptly adjust their knowledge acquisition and retention strategies to improve their grades.

As for component 6, several authors affirm that using the Microsoft Teams and Zoom Video platform to organize small-group videoconference workshops can improve collaborative learning in online classes; through this method, the teachers can assign problems and ask the groups to find solutions. The team leaders will then share their final report written with Google Docs or even present it, generating a benchmarking space. Besides, through the self-directed group discussions, the students can report what they learned, talk about the class material, exchange opinions and news of the important topics of their academic specialty with their peers online (Van Heuvelen, Daub & Ryswyk, 2020; Gemmel, Goetz, James, Jesse & Ratliff, 2020; Sahi, Mishra & Singh, 2020).

On the other hand, Zhao, Wu & Liu (2020) have proposed seven pragmatic strategies for teachers to deal with in different phases ([before], [during], and [after]) of online teaching (table 4). Each strategy includes implementations and suggestions that facilitate the resolution of concerns regarding preparation tips for online lessons, class delivery, reflection on teaching activities, and teaching resources, among other relevant topics.

Table 4 7 Pragmatic Strategies for Online Teaching

Phase	Strategy and Definitions		
Before	**1.Enhance online teaching design** Keep optimizing your teaching design, and improve your online teaching environment, resources, and processes, hence offering students better online learning experiences.		
	2.Select proper teaching methods Different online teaching methods are selected by taking into varying factors into account:	Consideration	• Course highlights • Characteristics of learners • Teaching objectives • Types of teaching content
		Teaching method	• Theoretical instruction • Research-based teaching • Skill training • Case-based teaching • Scenario simulation • Virtual experiments • Independent research-based learning
During	**3.Streamline the teaching process** Procedural, dynamics and tempo of instruction should be improved or even redesigned according to teaching activities to keep students fully engaged in online learning.		

4.Design well-targeted teaching activities

Online teaching activities encompass instruction from teachers, students' learning, and interactions between them, among others. Therefore, it is necessary for you to devise a series of targeted teaching activities based on the features of the courses and learners.

5.Make good use of online resources

You can distribute resources (you create by yourself, buy from others, or download over the Internet free of charge) to students for use before, during, and after a class, so that they can study independently, fill their knowledge gaps, and consolidate what they have learned.

After			
	6.Interact with students frequently While teaching at a distance, you may design more interactive sessions to engage students in your online classes.	Basic interaction	• Student attendance check-in • Raise questions • Presentation during discussions
		Interactive tasks	• Guide the students to use keyboard, mouse, and other gadgets to interact with the teaching content • Develop or buy dynamic web pages, VR, AR, and other interactive content
		Collaborative tasks	Divide students into groups for • Project-based learning • Research-based learning
	7.Give feedback properly Provide your students with immediate and targeted feedback.	Diagnostic Evaluation	• Test students' cognitive styles. • Test students' cognitive levels. • Set up teaching goals for the whole class, or provide supplementary materials for individual students.
		Process Evaluation	• Embed quizzes into an online lesson. • Collect the data on student logins to the online teaching platform. • Assess students' commitment. Understand their learning achievement. Define learning approaches.
		Formative Evaluation	• Give online test of the course. • Comment on student works in class.

Source: Zhao, Wu & Liu (2020)

3. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Given the rapid increase in cases of COVID-19 contagion in Chile, the Catholic University of Maule (Spanish: *Universidad Católica del Maule*, UCM), an institution adhering to the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (Spanish: *Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas*, CRUCH) and *Red Universitaria G9* (a non-profit private law corporation that brings together traditional Chilean Private Universities), decided to deliver education remotely to protect the integrity of students and their teaching and administrative staffs, implementing online teaching to maintain the continuity of education. During the pandemic, the students have to download all class materials and participate in online assessments stored and enabled on an LMS platform while teachers do synchronous classes through Microsoft Teams virtual classrooms.

The Direction of General Training (Spanish: *Dirección de Formación General*, DFG) is responsible for teaching English 1, 2, and 3 courses for specific purposes. UCM students must take English 1, 2 to 3 according to the plan of study of their school. During the pandemic, students enroll and participate in online classes. The online class meets once a week, and each class lasts for 2 hours (one hour for synchronous learning and another for asynchronous assignments, in conformity with the indication of the university). There is no difference in terms of course content and learning material between online and face-to-face classes so that students could still develop both transversal and specific cognitive competency associated with the professional field and formulate communication (listening, oral, reading and writing) and collaborative skills as established in the study program.

4. RESEARCH METHODS
4.1 Research Design
This study followed the mixed methodology, so its quantitative and qualitative data collection procedure (Pole, 2009) would allow qualitative data to complement and explain the "quantitative discoveries" (p.4) and deepen the understanding of the phenomenon of the study. Employing an exploratory descriptive paradigm, we can detect regularities, describe associations between variables, generate hypotheses, and contract them in subsequent studies (Anguita, Labrador & Campos, 2003).

4.2 Participants
The study covered a non-probabilistic sample of 341 students belonging to Biotechnology Engineering (71), Entrepreneurial Engineering (67), Statistical Engineering (1), Physical therapy (1), Science Pedagogy (36), Psychology (78), Medical Technology (64), and Sociology (23) taking English 1 at UCM during the second semester of the 2020 academic year, from July to December 2020.

4.3 Instruments and Validations
To corroborate students' perceptions about online classes, the 15 English teachers of the DFG agreed that it was necessary to incorporate a student self-assessment, taking 10% of the final grade. The teachers and the curriculum manager had a meeting to create the questionnaire, and through a homonymous application called *Mentimeter*, they raised the most frequent keywords (e.g., contribution in teamwork, level of responsibility, class participation, use of the platform, punctuality, etc.) as variables for creating the said instrument. Finally, there were sixteen variables used in the questionnaire, which consists of sixteen closed items on the Likert scale (1 (never) - 2 (sometimes) - 3 (many times) - 4 (always)) and two open items: one to write a comment and suggestion, and another to place the final grade that each student considers deserved on their online learning. These teachers who participated in the questionnaire creation have over ten years of English teaching experience, so they are experts capable of designing suitable items to measure the students' perceptions of online learning.

We will also demonstrate the results of the two oral tests (each representing 30% of the final mark) to affirm the concordance between the students' perception of remote

teaching and the summative evaluation results. Table 5 has all the relevant information about both tests.

Table 5 Details about the oral tests

	Oral test 1	Oral test 2
Timing	Week 4	Week 12
Topic	Meeting people	Life at work
Evaluative requirements	As a group (3-4 people), develop a conversation that represents the first meeting with the new colleagues.	As a group, develop an interview conducted by a radio program host to find out about the typical working day of professionals in your disciplinary area.
Thematic approaches	**Functional axis**: Interacting with others in professional contexts. **Lexical axis**: High-frequency lexicon related to greetings, the alphabet, numbers, nouns referring to people; countries, nationalities and languages, among others. **Grammatical axis**: Formulation of basic questions (name, age, address, etc.); uses of verb to be; use of more frequent interrogative particles (what, which, who, where, etc.); was (I was born…); among others.	**Functional axis**: presentation of work environment activities. **Lexical axis**: high-frequency lexicon related to adjectives to describe people, places and objects; verbs related to professional activities; among others. **Grammatical axis**: present simple, present continuous; possessive pronouns; prepositions, comparatives, among others.
Evaluative instrument	Role play rubric	

Source: Own creation

To ensure that the self-assessment instrument (quantitative part) has the required construct validity and reliability, in the last week of the first semester of 2020, we enabled this questionnaire on the university's LMS platform to carry out a pilot test on 34 students of the English 1 course. As this questionnaire has sixteen ordinal variables on the Likert scale and has 34 observations given by the participants, for Castañeda (2010), it is pertinent to study the validity of the scale and its reliability through using factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha.

The use of factor analysis aims to corroborate "the construction and analysis of questionnaires and, more specifically, of test attitude scales in general" (Morales, 2011, p.1). Before conducting the study in the second semester, we carefully examined these sixteen items and found out that the variables of items 11, 15, and 16 do not correlate with those of the other thirteen items. We then carried out a content and exploratory study with the factor analysis of SPSS version 21 (educational license version, purchased by UCM) to determine "the dimensionality of the constructs" (Castañeda, 2010, p 123) and analyze the reliability and validity of the remaining thirteen variables. The KMO value (0.609) and Bartlett's sphericity test (2.75) were obtained in the first instance in table 6, showing a correlation structure between these variables.

Table 6 Factor analysis test

KMO and test of Bartlett

Sample adequacy measure of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin.		*0,609*
Sphericity test of Bartlett	*Approximate Chi-square*	*275,235*
	gl	*78*
	Sig.	*0,000*

Source: Own creation through SPSS 21.0

Subsequently, to verify if the variables had the behavior of the multivariate normal distribution, we used the method of principal components and Varimax rotation (table 7 [reduction of variables] and table 8 [rotated component matrix]) to determine the number of dimensions and the relationship of these variables according to their belonging dimensions.

Table 7 Reduction of variables

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Sums of the squared saturations of the extraction			Sums of the squared saturations of the rotation		
	Total	Variance %	Accumulated %	Total	Variance %	Accumulated %	Total	Variance %	Accumulated %
1	5,158	39,680	39,680	5,158	39,680	39,680	3,648	28,059	28,059
2	2,072	15,941	55,620	2,072	15,941	55,620	3,056	23,509	51,568
3	1,969	15,142	70,763	1,969	15,142	70,763	2,495	19,195	70,763
4	0,872	6,705	77,468						
5	0,750	5,768	83,236						
6	0,494	3,799	87,035						
7	0,438	3,367	90,402						
8	0,370	2,848	93,250						
9	0,287	2,205	95,454						
10	0,245	1,886	97,340						
11	0,198	1,521	98,862						
12	0,120	0,926	99,788						
13	0,028	0,212	100,000						

Source: Own creation

The result of table 7 shows that these thirteen variables can only be organized into three dimensions since there are three components with an eigenvalue greater than 1. On the other hand, through the values of the variable of each item shown in table 8, the variables of Q1, Q2, Q6, Q12 can be distributed in dimension 1: participation and contribution of the student in synchronous classes; Q3, Q7, Q8, Q9 in dimension 2: student commitment and responsibility; Q4, Q5, Q10, Q13, Q14 in dimension 3: autonomy and self-discipline in learning.

Table 8 Rotated component matrix

Item	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3
Q1	-0,104	0,033	0,781
Q2	-0,019	0,359	0,731
Q3	0,384	0,736	0,035
Q4	0,836	-0,081	0,049
Q5	0,135	0,225	0,813
Q6	0,307	-0,221	0,669
Q7	0,339	0,758	0,34
Q8	0,091	0,803	-0,062
Q9	-0,149	0,823	0,2
Q10	0,874	-0,071	0,074
Q12	0,273	0,136	0,835
Q13	0,778	0,395	0,059
Q14	0,727	0,353	0,124
13	0.8681	0.8517	0.7617

Source: Own creation

As the closed items have 0.83 Cronbach's alpha (0.8681 the variables of the first dimension; 0.8517 of the second; 0.7617 of the third), in other words, the improved instrument is a more valid and reliable construct.

5. FINDINGS

Table 9 shows that, for dimension 1, over 60% of the students affirmed that they always participated and contributed in the classes; for dimension 2, over 85% indicated that, despite the contingency, they always overcame their difficulties and also helped their classmates learn; for dimension 3, over 78% indicated that they always had made their best to fulfill their responsibility as a student in online classes.

Table 9 Result of the questionnaire

Dimension	Question	A	MT	S	N
Dimension 1	Q1. I participated punctually in my synchronous classes via Teams.	58%	30%	11%	0%
	Q2. I respected the start and end time of the synchronous classes.	81%	15%	4%	1%
	Q6. I made the effort to participate in the online classes by asking questions and giving my opinion when necessary.	51%	22%	22%	5%
	Q12. I presented relevant and timely contributions in virtual classes/chat or in the platform forums.	53%	23%	19%	5%

		60.75 %	22.5 %	14%	2.75 %
Dimension 2	Q4. Due to the current contingency, I made the effort to adapt my learning methods.	91%	8%	1%	0%
	Q10. I have tried to collaborate with my colleagues, even remotely, and help those who are more complicated with their learning.	85%	5%	5%	5%
	Q13. I used my autonomous learning hours responsibly.	78%	18%	5%	0%
	Q14. I made an effort to overcome my academic difficulties and learn the content that I found difficult.	89%	10%	1%	0%
		85.75 %	10.25 %	3%	1.25 %
Dimension 3	Q3. In the case of not having attended the synchronous classes, I reviewed the recordings and explanations of my teacher.	86%	11%	3%	0%
	Q5. I actively used all the study materials available on the virtual platform.	72%	22%	6%	0%
	Q7. I reviewed the contents covered in classes.	79%	18%	2%	0%
	Q8. I fulfilled my academic obligations in the established times (work, homework, reading, etc.)	71%	23%	6%	0%
	Q9. I checked the virtual platform to keep up to date with the contents of the classes.	85%	12%	3%	0%
		78.6%	17.2 %	4%	0%

Source: Own creation

Figure 1 shows the result of the open item (question 17) in which the students have to self-assign a mark for their online learning. It is observable that only 119 (35%) out of 341 students self-assigned 7 (the highest grade in Chile, equivalent to 100 points on a scale of 100). The second and third highest grades were 6.5 and 6.0, instead of 6.9 and 6.8; furthermore, two students self-assigned 4 (passing grade, equivalent to 60 points on a scale of 100), and one self-assigned 3 (failing grade, equivalent to 42.8 points on a scale of 100). As a result, this instrument has allowed students to reflect and consciously assess their online learning results in the English 1 course during a pandemic.
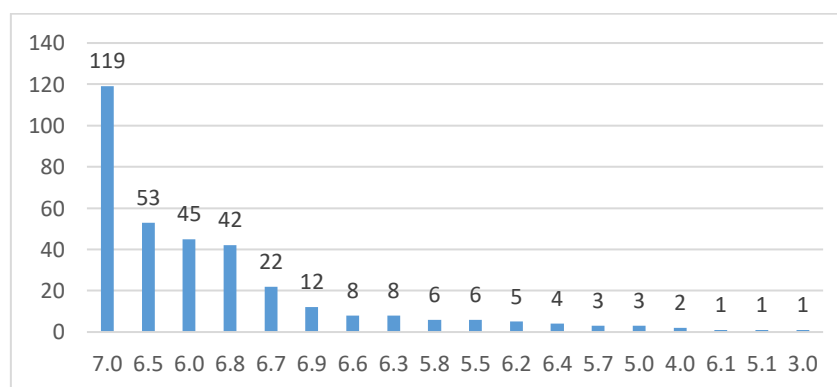

Figure 1 Scores of self-assessment
Source: Own creation

Regarding the other open item (question 18), 103 students commented about their online learning in time of pandemic (discarding one that put [no comment] and another, a happy face). From these comments, we designated the following referential categories and sub-categories:

1. Appreciation towards the teacher:
   a. Teacher attitudes: patience, enthusiasm and willingness.
   b. Clear-cut explanation.
   c. Good design and development of the classes.
   d. Strategies to motivate the participation and collaboration of colleagues.
   e. Disposition of the teacher: being aware of the difficulties of the students.
2. Valuation towards the classes:
   a. Content and activities appropriate to the online modality.
   b. Contextualized and career path-appropriate learning for students.
   c. Didactic class.
3. Student achievement, success, and satisfaction:
   a. Felt motivated to continue taking the next course (English 2).
   b. Improved skills, performance and skills.
   c. Overcame the pain of the loss of loved ones due to the pandemic.
   d. Achieved collaborative and autonomous learning.
4. Thanks and congratulations to the teacher
5. Suggestions to improve the class:
   a. Creation of more LMS platform exercises to practice more.
   b. The synchronous class should last more than 1 hour.

These categories are not independent, nor should they be regarded in this way, because a student's comment could encompass more than one category. Here are some examples:
Category 1 and 2:

1.   *The teacher encourages participation, which helps build up our knowledge. The course was developed in the best possible way, despite the current circumstances* (student No. 183 of Medical Technology).

2.   *Regarding the classes, the exercises given by the teacher were well done, complementing the subject a lot, in addition to the fact that the teacher was always in contact with the students in the event of any technical complication or difficulty* (student No. 84 of Sociology).

Category 2 and 3:

1.   *Something important to emphasize is how didactic the classes were, I learned and reinforced the contents much more* (student No.176 of Medical Technology).

2.   *The course was a pleasant experience and despite the distance I feel that I learned a lot. I feel satisfied with my performance, knowledge and skills acquired* (student

No.235 of Science Pedagogy).

3.　　　*I find that I learned and reviewed some content that was difficult for me, when we did activities in class I always did them so that I could see where I was wrong and learn from that, and I made a lot of effort in the things that I did not understand* (student No.295 of Psychology).

Category 2 and 4:

Congratulate and ask the teacher to follow the practical methods in the course, such as applying English in recording work, such as audios, podcasts etc. (student No.208 of Medical Technology)

Category 1, 3 and 4:

I thank him for the patience that the teacher had with me and for solving every doubt I had, but above all for his positive self-esteem that was contagious and I felt spirited at class time (student No.248 of Science Pedagogy).

Category 2, 3 and 4:

I made a lot of effort to adapt and improve my level of English, which was already somewhat advanced, I consider that I improved in the oral field and I was able to help my classmates in their doubts, the classes were very educational and interesting, thank you very much for all teacher! (student No.232 of Science Pedagogy).

Category 1, 2 and 4:

I found that the session 23 teacher, the teacher, was super nice and explained the contents well in general lines. I have no complaints towards him for his teaching method, after classes, he gives us an assignment (student No.50 of Entrepreneurial Engineering).

Category 1 and 3:

I find that the teacher made the matter very clear since he dedicated himself to explaining and that we understood, as well as giving us exercises that facilitated learning (student No.58 of Entrepreneurial Engineering).

Category 1, 2 and 3:

From my point of view, the classes served me a lot and despite being online I managed to learn the contents, in addition the teacher had a very good disposition (student No.65 of Entrepreneurial Engineering).

To carry out the analysis of these comments, we considered that each one could refer to any of these five categories, and, for the final count, we took into account all the concerned categories in the comments. For example, if one of the comments involves only one category, we would assign 1 point to the category, 0.5 for two, 0.33 for three, and 0.25 for four. As there was no comment covering all five categories in this study, table 10 only showed comments covering up to 4 categories.

Table 10 Partial analysis of comments based on categories

Student	Comment regarding				
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
2	0,5	0,5			
13					1
17	0,25	0,25	0,25	0,25	
337		0,33	0,33	0,33	

Source: Own creation

In terms of comments made in terms of categories (table 11), 22.89 (22%) students commented on category 1, 21.71 (21%) on category 2, 14.89 (14%) on category 3, 18.06 (18%) on category 4, and 25.32 (25%) on category 5. In this sense, around 75% of the students manifested having good online learning in the pandemic, and 25% made suggestions to improve the online classes. The most frequent suggestions were: (1) incorporating more learning materials on the LMS platform and (2) that the online classes should last longer than an hour as established by the university.

Table 11 Comments made in terms of category

	Category					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
N° of students	22,89	21,71	14,89	18,06	25,32	103
	22%	21%	14%	18%	25%	100%

Source: Own creation

Table 12 shows the overall results of the self-assessment questionnaire, in synthesis: (1) more than 90% of the students declared that they did their best in the online learning process, (2) almost all students (99.1%) gave themselves passing marks (over 4.0), and (3) 75% of the comments showed compliance with the online classes, while 25% indicated that the course could become better with some improvement.

Table 12 Synthesis of self-assessment questionnaire results

Item	Summary	Results
Likert scale questionnaire	• Three dimensions: 1) participation and contribution of the student in synchronous classes, 2) commitment and responsibility of the student and 3) autonomy and self-discipline in learning. • 13 Likert scale questions, classified from	74.3% of the responders answered the questions with the answer [always (4)] 17.5% of the responders answered the questions with the answer [many times (3)]

	• 1 to 4 • 341 responders	7% of the responders answered the questions with the answer [sometimes (2)] 1.2% of the responders answered the questions with the answer [never (1)]
Self-assigned score	• 1 – 7 scale • 341 responders	338 (99.1%) students self-assigned a grade higher than 4.0 (equivalent to 60 points on a scale of 1 to 100). 2 (0.59%) students self-assigned a grade equal to 4.0. 1 (0.3%) student self-assigned a grade lower than 4.0.
Comments	• All responses are classified into five categories: 1) appreciation towards the teacher, 2) valuation towards the classes, 3) student achievement, success and satisfaction, 4) thanks and congratulations to the teacher and 5) Suggestions to improve the class • Open ended question • 103 responders	22% of the respondents gave a comment linked to the category (1) 21% of the respondents gave a comment linked to the category (2) 14% of the respondents gave a comment linked to the category (3) 18% of the respondents gave a comment linked to the category (4) 25% of the respondents gave a comment linked to the category (5)

Source: Own creation

Table 13 shows the results obtained by a group of students randomly chosen from different university areas and the average grades of all students in each oral test. There is a slight drop in the average of the second mark since the students spent less time studying English to catch up with other subjects. From the twelfth week on, students were generally overwhelmed by exams and coursework deadlines for their other courses (the semester ends in the fifteenth or sixteenth week). However, their second test results remain satisfactory. Regarding the passing rate, in all areas, 100% of the students enrolled past, except for Entrepreneurial Engineering & Sociology, 5.7% of its students failed because they never attended the online class nor took the tests.

Table 13 Oral test results of one random group & mean scores

University program	Oral test 1						Oral test 2					
	Dialogue script 5%						Dialogue script 5%					
		Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1		Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1
		7	3	0	7	4,3		7	7	0	7	5,3
Science Pedagogy	Verbal performance 25%						Verbal performance 25%					
	Members	Fluency	Pronunciation	Interpretation	Score 2	Final score 1+2	Members	Fluency	Pronunciation	Interpretation	Score 2	Final score 1+2
	Student 1	7	5	6	6,0	5,7	Student 1	6	6	6	6,0	5,9
	Student 2	7	5	6	6,0	5,7	Student 2	6	6	5	5,7	5,6
	Student 3	7	7	7	7,0	6,5	Student 3				0,0	pending
Mean score of all 36 students	**6.28**						**5.97**					

Psychology

Left

Dialogue script 5%

	Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1
	7	7	6	7	6,8

Verbal performance 25%

Mmebers	Fluency	Pronunciation	Intepretation	Score 2	Final score 1 + 2
Student 1	7	7	7	7,0	7,0
Student 2	7	6	6	6,3	6,4
Student 3	7	5	7	6,3	6,4

Mean score of all 78 students: 6.45

Right

Dialogue script 5%

	Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1
	7	7	3	7	6,0

Verbal performance 25%

Mmebers	Fluency	Pronunciation	Intepretation	Score 2	Final score 1 + 2
Student 1	7	6	6	6,3	6,3
Student 2	7	7	7	7,0	6,8
Student 3	7	6	5	6,0	6,0

6.1

Medical Technology

Left

Dialogue script 5%

	Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1
	7	7	6	7	6,8

Verbal performance 25%

Members	Fluency	Pronunciation	Interpretation	Score 2	Final score 1 + 2
Student 1	7	7	6	6,7	6,7
Student 2	7	7	7	7,0	7,0
Student 3	7	6	7	6,7	6,7

Mean score of all 64 students: 6.6

Right

Dialogue script 5%

	Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1
	7	6	3	7	5,8

Verbal performance 25%

Members	Fluency	Pronunciation	Interpretation	Score 2	Final score 1 + 2
Student 1	7	7	6	6,7	6,5
Student 2	7	7	4	6,0	6,0
Student 3	5	5	6	5,3	5,4

6.2

Biotechnology Engineering

Left

Dialogue script 5%

	Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1
	7	5	5	7	6,0

Verbal performance 25%

Members	Fluency	Pronunciation	Interpretation	Score 2	Final score 1 + 2
Student 1	7	5	7	6,3	6,3
Student 2	7	7	7	7,0	6,8
Student 3	7	6	7	6,7	6,5

Mean score of all 71 students: 5.8

Right

Dialogue script 5%

	Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1
	7	7	0	7	5,3

Verbal performance 25%

Members	Fluency	Pronuncia	Interpretation	Score 2	Final score 1 + 2
Student 1	6	6	6	6,0	5,9
Student 2	7	6	3	5,3	5,3
Student 3	7	6	6	6,3	6,1

5.4

Entrepreneurial Engineering & Sociology	Dialogue script 5%							Dialogue script 5%					
			Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1			Context	Spelling	Grammar	Word N	Score 1
			7	6	6	7	6,5			7	7	4	7	6,3
	Verbal performance 25%							Verbal performance 25%					
	Mmebers	Fluency	Pronunciation	Interpretation	Score 2	Final score 1+2		Mmebers	Fluency	Pronunciation	Interpretation	Score 2	Final score 1+2
	Student 1	7	6	7	6,7	6,6		Student 1	7	6	2	5,0	5,3
	Student 2	6	6	6	6,0	6,1		Student 2	7	6	1	4,7	5,0
	Student 3	7	7	7	7,0	6,9		Student 3	7	6	5	6,0	6,1
Mean score of all 90 students	**5.7**							**5.1**					

Source: Own creation

6. DISCUSSION

Chile experienced a political and social crisis and university student protests at the end of 2019. However, from March 2020 till now, Chilean higher education has been able to achieve outstanding results, for example providing emergency technological solutions, enhancing the skills of teachers to operate in virtual environments of high technical complexity, and offering a didactic complement where students and teachers can find software, readings, exercises and, of course, communication mechanisms. Although the research conveys the online English learning implemented in one CRUCH university in Chile, its results are not only valid on the national stage; they can be a reference for any teacher or researcher worldwide who wishes to practice online English teaching or carry out investigation about this topic. For that reason, this study can link up with the broader and larger fabric of English language teaching in the context of health and social crisis in Latin America and the whole globe.

Online learning and teaching have been tested and improved during the pandemic, so the return to face-to-face education does not mean that digital tools' usage and online classes will be interrupted since then; otherwise, they will stay to complement the development of traditional face-to-face lessons. To inquire about the possibility of applying online instruction and assessment methods after the pandemic in higher education, Tartavulea et al. (2020) surveyed 362 university professors and students from 13 European countries. According to the result, the respondents recognized to a medium or high degree (mean values of 2.5 or more) that these methods would continue to be used long after the pandemic. Regarding the implementation of online assessment, the authors noted that respondents perceived to a high degree (3, mean value) the need for implementing online formative assessment after the pandemic. The authors state that the pandemic has made the quick integration of digital tools in higher education classes possible.

In any case, this form of teaching and learning is an important alternative that allows the educational establishment to act in emergencies (for example, another outbreak of COVID-19) or unforeseeable situations (for example, barricades on highways that prevent students from traveling between communes to reach university, which happens from time to

time in Chile). On the other hand, although our finding tells us, like Rahmawati, Fauziati, and Marmanto (2021), technology is one of the difficulties of blended learning, during two years of using digital tools, educators have learned how to use them and incorporate these tools at any time in the class. Additionally, university students have become accustomed to ubiquitous or mobile learning, had better academic performance, and developed communication skills than attending traditional classes before the COVID-19 pandemic; these results differ markedly from Sugianto and Ulfah (2020) and Hermansyah and Aridah (2021).

The teaching and learning process during the pandemic implies an efficient preparation for the development of technological competence for both teachers and students, given that the digital technology and the structured platform of online learning can "provide efficiency, flexibility, and quality of the learning process" (Triana & Nugroho, 2021, p. 96). The increasing need for technology will strengthen digitization in the educational field and simultaneously motivate innovation in telecommunications industries and companies. In this sense, we believe that in time after the pandemic, pedagogical methods with digital tools will become commonplace in superior education classes, and the future teachers will be more prepared in this area of competence if the higher education system continues to adapt to an online world and integrates the competence of teaching virtual classes in the curriculum of the pedagogical programs.

7. CONCLUSION

In our study regarding the university students' perception towards online English classes during the pandemic, we noticed a significant percentage of students kept a high level of motivation and genuine commitment towards online learning. Besides, the students stated that the characteristics of the teacher (cheerful, caring and always giving them timely feedback and help they need), the didactic method used in class (student-centered), and the class contents (organized and stored on the LMS) were crucial factors contributing to their achievement in the subject.

Also, we realized that the after-class workload required during their English 1 course was reasonable and adequate (after each class, the students have to do one reading comprehension task, one grammar drill task, and one group task). Some more enthusiastic students still requested more assignments and more listening and reading materials on the LMS to improve their English. In short, the results of the survey and the high passing rate have attested the good result of Chilean remote university English teaching during the pandemic.

According to UNESCO (2020b), Chile "is the only country that has developed a comprehensive national action plan to deal with the consequences of COVID-19 in higher education" (p. 31). Its higher education institutions, faced with this global health contingency, were, although not the best, quite prepared to guarantee the continuity of teaching. Besides, in terms of connectivity, both the Chilean government and the university have assumed the commitment to support vulnerable students, providing them with an Internet plan and a computer so that they will not have a problem attending online classes.

Finally, we recommend doing the following to guarantee the quality of online learning and keep students motivated and with a high commitment:

(1) teachers have to develop classes with more didactic methodological strategies and always be aware of the doubts and academic needs of students through good communication, and

(2) the government and higher education institutions have to mitigate the effect of the digital divide by providing solidarity assistance, such as, for example, free connectivity plan, ICT student grant and provision of computers to disadvantaged students.

Potential conflicts of interest

None of the authors has potential conflicts of interest regarding the journal's editorial nor management staff.

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