

Teaching English at time of Covid 19

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Abstract

In 2019, the world was forced to stay at home due to a pandemic that began to spread from China to different countries. Consequently, education is highly affected by the restrictions taken by confinement, causing a radical change in the processes of all educational institutions, which allowed the methodologies and strategies used to become a challenge for teachers, thus achieving adaptation from policies to new ways of teaching mediated by technology. This article focuses on the context of higher education, taking as a reference the Bachelor's program in foreign languages with emphasis on English at Luis Amigo Catholic University. Analyzing how educational actors face the new challenges of education mediated by technology and language policies that the government has provided to solve this pandemic. The interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach was used as a methodology. The study aims at understanding the perceptions that educational actors have regarding new teaching strategies. Furthermore, it, seeks to find an impact on the teaching learning processes that allows showing the results obtained, whether positive or negative, generated by this phenomenon.

Keywords: Covid-19, Online Education, Linguistic policies, Teaching challenges

Resumen

En el año 2019, el mundo se vio obligado a quedarse en casa, debido a una pandemia que comienza a esparcirse desde China hasta los diferentes países. Por consiguiente, la educación es sumamente afectada por las restricciones tomadas por el confinamiento, causando un cambio radical en los procesos de todas instituciones educativas, la cual permitieron que las metodologías y estrategias utilizadas se convirtieran en un reto para los docentes, logrando así la adaptación de las políticas a las nuevas formas de enseñar mediadas por la tecnología. Este artículo se enfoca en el contexto de la educación superior, tomando de referente al programa de Licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en inglés de la Universidad Católica Luis Amigo. Analizando cómo los actores educativos enfrentan los nuevos retos de la educación mediada por la tecnología y las políticas lingüísticas que el gobierno ha proporcionado para solventar en esta pandemia. Se utilizó la metodología interpretativa con enfoque cualitativo que pretende entender las percepciones que tienen los actores educativos frente a las nuevas estrategias de enseñanza. Buscando finalmente encontrar un impacto en los procesos de enseñanza - aprendizaje que permite mostrar los resultados obtenidos ya sean positivos o negativos generados por este fenómeno.

Palabras clave: Covid-19, Desafíos docentes, Educación en línea, Políticas lingüísticas,

Degree Requirement

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Tabla de contenido

1	<i>Introduction.</i>	1
1.1	Context.	1
1.2	Statement of the problem	2
1.3	Literature Review	2
1.4	Research Question	5
1.5	Objectives.	6
1.5.1	General Objective	6
1.5.2	Specific Objectives	6
2	<i>Method</i>	6
2.1	Research Methodology	6
2.2	Population.	7
2.3	Data Collection	7
2.3.1	Interviews	7
2.4	Data Analysis	7
2.4.1	Table systematization.	8
3	<i>Results.</i>	9
4	<i>Discussion.</i>	11
4.1	Implication and interpretation.	11
4.2	Conclusions and recommendations.	13
	<i>References.</i>	14
	<i>Appendix</i>	15

1 Introduction.

1.1 Context.

The pandemic has brought major changes in language policies in a global, national, and local way. Covid-19 has brought with its multiple deaths and problems, and it has even given way to restructuring or reform, in many contexts and aspects globally, and education is no exception. Education has been directly implicated in which regulatory entities have had to take action to deal with this problem. So, we have analyzed the forced changes that the pandemic brought us in the educational context. In addition, this phenomenon is so recent, and we did not find a wide range of information nor depth in it. Therefore, we realize the relevance of this historical event and its impact on the educational context.

Now, the government has not developed programs to promote English in higher education institutions; we have found, in the regulatory actions of the government, superficial participation; the government has acted superficially. In 2020, the MEN and PNB have developed virtual programs for basic and secondary education, they have developed an educational video game called BeThe1Challenge for basic secondary education. However, these emerging government actions, with respect to the English language, have not reached higher education institutions, so the government has not provided sufficient tools to reinforce this process. Therefore, the participants in this context have had to face this situation independently.

In this vein, it is observed how higher education institutions have had to respond to the new global circumstance, especially the Luis Amigó University. In other words, see the change from traditional education to compulsory distance education. Thus, higher education has had to face this problem almost autonomously.

While it is true that the pandemic has changed educational policies, leading us to a virtual model or virtual methodology. Continuously, the teaching community is living a different time from the traditional one, turning this situation into new challenges for them; now teachers have been struggling for quite some time to adjust to what could be the "new normal". On the other hand, it is understood that the teaching of the English

language in Colombia continues to be one of the greatest challenges in the educational field; Colombian education finds many inconsistencies due to teacher training, language policies established by the government, resources, among many other aspects that do not facilitate meaningful teaching and learning processes, nor their assertiveness in them. Consequently, this study is important for us because it will allow us to analyze how teachers face the new challenges of the pandemic and the language policies established because they have had to resort at least to previous knowledge of digital platforms to counteract this phenomenon.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The purpose is to analyze how teachers face the new challenges in the pandemic and the linguistic policies established.

1.3 Literature Review

Currently, humanity is going through a pandemic called Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. According to (WHO, 2020). Therefore, nowadays people are looking for new ways to face the global phenomenon to contribute to the improvement in all aspects with an emphasis on education. As (United Nations, August 2020) The COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. The participants' promoters of the educational community will not only have to adapt to these new modalities; at the same time, they have been forced to generate great changes to normalize and/or improve these teaching and learning processes. As (Jeanne Allen, 2020) argues, “The impact on staff and students is uneven – in some contexts, for example, in many universities, there are already established online and mixed modes of course delivery, such that the onus is now on building greater capacity through these avenues”. All these new educational linguistic policies and virtual mediations must be articulated with precision and contextualized at the same time to solve the question that arises in the academy. How to make English learning meaningful or of quality for learners?

At present, we are seeing a great reform of language policies at a global level due to the emerging situation of a pandemic that today impacts the whole world. Consequently, within the educational context, there are a series of linguistic policies to control, regulate, establish models and / or patterns to be followed such as; guidelines, regulations, laws, standards, etc. where the participants must operate under said premises. Language policies have been defined in several ways, according to (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), "A language policy is a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules, and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the societies, groups or system". It means that regulatory entities decide to frame what are the standards that society must follow, these language policies have been implemented throughout the national and local territory, both in schools and in public and private universities in the country for teaching and learning processes.

The methods through applications or virtual platforms have received a lot of attention with the arrival of Covid-19. According to (MEN, 2020), "virtual education is also called "online education", it refers to the development of training programs that have cyberspace as a teaching and learning scenario". In many higher education institutions, the distance education movement and / or the incorporation of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) has been an opportunity to expand flexible, taking into account that (GISBERT & otros, 1992) refer to the concept "Conjunto de herramientas, soportes y canales para el tratamiento y acceso a la información", learning modalities, setting the stage for a change sustained towards more online learning, many of which turned to ICT, forcing teachers to switch to teaching lessons online. According to (Moreno, 2020) The pedagogical innovation that has to be carried out in the times of Coronavirus will be able to tear down walls, knock down myths, beliefs and manage to generate in teachers the motivation to make the educational change that the generation of young people we are training needs. Ensuring continuity of learning during school closings became a priority for governments around the world.

As we have mentioned before, many institutions in different countries have suspended classes while others have migrated towards virtual teaching methodologies in which it has been proposed to privilege learning over teaching. For this, according to

Moreno (2020), "It has been sought to replace the master classes, by classes that promote active learning, where the student is the protagonist and more proactive; the use of the flipped classroom, learning through problems, and of course the pedagogical use of ICT". It should be noted that the emergency that concerns us all as a society has generated countless changes in education and teaching models, all to improve the quality of educational service provision. Therefore, it is necessary to identify from the guidelines of the National Education Ministry the adaptations that have been made or proposed to carry out the teaching of English through the virtual modality and the quality of it.

Teachers have also had to work on their pedagogical constructions to be able to solve the teaching, uniting theory with practice and the virtual medium, pedagogical thoughtfulness simultaneously feeds and is fed by effective capabilities of teachers that enable them to understand and identify problems, analyze and assess information, consider and evaluate alternatives, and then choose the best available alternative, which is then subjected to further critical appraisal. In this sense, a theory of practice is "an ongoing, living, working theory" (Chambers, 1992) involving continual reflection and action. If teachers' reflection and action are seen as constituting one side of the practicality coin, their insights and intuition can be seen as constituting the other.

To address this process one of the concepts that guide our research is Covid-19 since; due to this phenomenon, there were sudden changes in education that forced pedagogical practices to be mediated by virtual platforms or what is known today as e-learning. The definition of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. According to WHO (2020).

Another of the fundamental concepts found in this research is language policies. Since these allow us to visualize which are the reforms that arise in the emerging situation of a pandemic. Language policies have been defined in several ways; according to Kaplan (1997), "A language policy is a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules, and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the societies, group or system"

On the other hand, another of the concepts found in this research is the Pedagogy of practicality. In this sense, a theory of practice is "an on-going, living, working theory" (Chamber, 1992, p. 13) involving continual reflection and action.

Finally, we have the concept of virtual education. According to the MEN, virtual education is also called "online education". It refers to the development of training programs that have cyberspace as a Teaching and learning scenario. which is connected with Gilbert y Otros (1992, p1), that refers to "set of tools, supports, and channels for the treatment and access to information".

To further complement our study, we first found that the ministry of education implements a ministerial directive 04, for higher education to implement the new dynamics of virtual education as of March 22, 2020. "Higher Education Institutions, within their autonomy, design plans, and strategies that facilitate the development of study plans without the need for the presence of students, guaranteeing in any case, the quality conditions recognized in the qualified registry". On the other hand, there was also an investigation of Venezuela carried out by the authors Hurtado Talavera, Frank Junior, which is entitled "Education in times of pandemic: the challenges of the 21st-century school." This study takes a look at the qualitative approach in which its main objective is to identify the challenges of the school in times of pandemic, mainly in information and communication technologies; which raises how teachers urgently require training that provides the skills and abilities in the face of this new scenario, this for the teacher to adapt and adjust to their methodological strategies that respond to the dynamics of society and its demands. We consider the relevance of this research since it is connected with our purposes of wanting to investigate how the professors of the degree in English at the Luis Amigo Catholic University are prepared to handle this new teaching modality and of course the teaching of a second language foreign.

1.4 Research Question

How do Educational actors deal with the language policies in their classes during pandemic time?

1.5 Objectives.

To develop our research process in order to achieve the above; we propose the following objectives:

1.5.1 General Objective

- ◆ To analyze how Educational actors, implement their pedagogical practices in accordance with the Language Policies established at the time of COVID-19.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives.

- ◆ To examine which are the Language Policies that guide teachers in their practices.
- ◆ To identify the strategies that the English program is implementing to develop the English classes at Luis Amigó University.
- ◆ To analyze how English teachers, promote meaningful learning in their classes.

2 Method

2.1 Research Methodology

The main objective of this research is to analyze how teachers face the new challenges in the pandemic and the linguistic policies established. We select interviews that contain open-ended questions and questionnaires where English teachers will express their perceptions about virtual classes and the methodologies they implement. Also, interview with directives of the English program. We will use the interpretative paradigm in order to understand and interpret this social phenomenon from the perspective of the participants, that is, their perceptions, their actions. For that reason, the approach will be qualitative with a phenomenological strategy. The author

Heidegger (1889-1976) work and was an orientator in this approach, he was who described the phenomenological as “estructura del mundo de la vida” He focused on life “Reflexiones en profundidad, descripción de la experiencia” (Carlos A. Sandoval Casilimas).

2.2 Population.

The population that are involved in our research are educational actors from Luis Amigo Catholic university, they work in the Program of Licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en inglés. One directive in order to revise the linguistic policies at the University for promoting English, and two English teachers one from “lenguaje basico I” and the other one from “lenguaje basico II” in comprehension and production in order to find some strategies about pedagogical practices to promote meaningful learning.

2.3 Data Collection

2.3.1 Interviews

This research uses the interview template. It contains open-ended questions previously prepared and discussed with the research team creating a script to follow up the objectives already mentioned and questionnaires where educational actors (directive, teachers) will express their perceptions about virtual classes and methodologies that they implement to promote meaningful learning.

2.4 Data Analysis

After the collection of the information the next part was to understand interviewers' context to procedure to analyze the data provide to our project, we followed three steps to accomplish the analysis. Firstly we transcribed the interviews to have a clear reading to interpret what the interviewers wanted to say making a connection with the specific objectives, secondly the main ideas of the participants that had connection with our literature review's concepts were highlighting, categorizing in

an specific group then we divided the information into sub-categories, and codes to create a body that helped us to analyzed and organize the information.

2.4.1 Table systematization.

Category	Subcategory	Codes			
Pedagogical practices	New Practices emerging from times of Covid-19	Education mediated by technology	Disadvantages	Irregularities	
			Teachers Adaptations	space schedule	
			Teacher identity	Enriching experience	
			Student role	Unfavorable interaction	
			Political agent	Restructuring	
Linguistic Policies	National	Education mediated by technology From home	Regulatory protocols	Slow down process.	
	Institutional (From Directors)	Zoom.			
		Campus Virtual.			
Teachers	Willingness to assist them	Handling tools			
Students' role	Students' rationality	Permeates the teaching identity			
	Preferences	Education mediated by technology	Disagreement.	Willingness to assist them	Laptor Process handling tools

3 Results.

After analyzing the results in the data collection and documents we could establish some preliminary findings related to the following themes: (a) Pedagogical practices emerging during times of Covid shape teachers' identity. (b) Teachers are policymakers. (c) Students' role permeates the teaching identity. (d) Covid 19 affects education negatively.

Pedagogical practices emerging during times of Covid shape teachers' identity

Education mediated by virtual class is challenging and in turn, it must go beyond just managing it. According to what is stated by MARTÍNEZ, F. (2003), “la innovación no vendrá de la tecnología de los medios que se utilicen, sino del modelo didáctico en el que éstos se apoyen y se incorporen”. Thus, the management of virtual scenarios become another tool to consistently reinforce the growth of the educator. As evidenced by participant 1, “it's been hard; one has had to adapt to many new issues. I'm not a technology-oriented person. Therefore, I have had to do lots of adaptations into what I do, using technology platforms; so, it's complicated, but it's also an opportunity to learn a lot”.

Teachers are Policymakers

Since Covid 19 arrived in our country, the pedagogical practices have changed abruptly. Students learn from home and teachers teach from home too, due to this virus spreading by having contact with other people. According to the MEN "Use of technologies in the development of education programs for work and human development". (MEN, 2020) Therefore, new pedagogical practices have been emerging, one of those practices is education mediated by technology. As participant 2 said "We needed to change everything into virtuality". The teacher had to adapt their professional practices and life to this modality, they had to restructure their schedule, this adaptation helped some of the teachers but also was a big disadvantage for others.

The pedagogical practices that are at the center of the teaching profession were shaken by the contingency caused by the Covid 19 Pandemic. Teachers are not passive technicians. On the contrary, they need to reflect on their practices and improve them

according to the demands of the context, or the current moment. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), Contreras (1998) "Teacher as a reflective practitioner." As participant 2 demonstrated "All the classes, all the things, and all the material, everything I had prepared. He needed to change everything, so everything changed. It was like she had planned it twice that semester" So teachers have had to establish their own ways of pedagogy, they have been forced to take agency, structure, or create their own rules to face this phenomenon. So, we must be in search of new directions that allow us to assume a critical position and be able to take agency in our field.

Students' role permeates the teaching identity

Conceiving the new dynamics facing education and the criticality of students at Luis Amigo University; generate a greater teaching challenge, which enables the teacher to be aware of their teaching method. As evidenced by P3 "I am grateful for the challenges because there are students who push her to give them more, and to know more, and to adopt new ideas to be flexible on her teaching methods". This reflects the challenge that participant 3 assumes, which permeates the teaching identity. Thus, according to (Barkhuizen (2017) "Identity is inevitably relational, which suggest that individual teachers need to join the community to which they desire to belong to" As teachers, it is understood that in the academic dynamics there is a close teacher-student relationship, which is shaping our being in order to favor the students.

Covid 19 affects education negatively

The pandemic led us to change in technology-mediated education. "Una teoría de la educación a distancia entendida como el diálogo didáctico mediado, da un paso más al desarrollar su propio modo de interpretar qué y cómo debe ser toda enseñanza a distancia" GARCÍA ARETIO, L. (2001) "definitivamente, en la enseñanza a distancia se requieren diferentes comportamientos, tanto en el docente como en el estudiante" It is considered that Covid 19 affects education negatively as this was reflected by the participants as disadvantages. As that was expressed by participant 1,2, and 3: P.1 "One can see that sometimes they do not turn on a camera, or a microphone, not because they don't want too but because they have problems in some cases technology problems, in other cases family problems, or personal, or even affective problems that affect their

possibility of participation” P.2 “I have never thought myself as a technological person and grew uncertain because I am not; it is difficult, and it was difficult the first semester of Covid was horrible, really stressful; one of the biggest challenges was that I first keep myself motivated” P.3 “Students most of the time say; teacher I don't have a camera, or it's not working, or something. So, you got like alright! No worries it's not a problem, but it also let's say that at least in my perception diminishes the quality of the interaction” So, most of the time all of them have problems, difficulties and / or irregularities, we are referring not only to the students but also to all the actors of the academic context in general. So, Covid 19 negatively affects education due to irregularities, because it is cold, there is no genuine interaction between its community.

4 Discussion.

4.1 Implication and interpretation.

The idea of this project was to inform how teachers handled this virtual modality in their practices and how effective their classes were. Also, how was the government implementing new rules and laws to help teachers in those pedagogical practices.

As we were searching for the information, we realized that the government was not interested to creating or doing new regulations for educational institutions, they only decreed

“Durante el tiempo que dure la emergencia sanitaria por causa de la pandemia del Coronavirus COVID-19, las entidades del sector público y privado procurarán que su empleados o contratistas cuya presencia no sea indispensable en la sede de trabajo, desarrollen las funciones y obligaciones bajo las modalidades de teletrabajo, trabajo en casa u otras similares.” In this order of ideas, during the process, we could see how teachers are exposed to many limitations. This is how they give evidence of the transformations of the teaching identity. According to Burns, A. Jack C. Richards (2009) “These roles are not static but emerge through the social processes of the classroom. Identity may be shaped by many factors, including personal biography, gender, culture, working conditions, age, and the school and classroom culture. The

concept of identity thus reflects how individuals see themselves and how they enact their roles within different settings”

On the other hand, the most significant contributions in pedagogical practices and teacher identity that could be seen reflected in this project have been those of a teacher as a political agent, but at the same time taking into account the role of the student since this is the main actor and promoter of the dynamics in the academy.

The professors have become political agents due to them overcoming all the obstacles that the pandemic has brought, they have invented new rules, they have restructured their methodologies, and to be able to provide the best education to their students, they have even “it's been hard; one has had to adapt to many new issues. I'm not a technology-oriented person. Therefore, I have had to do lots of adaptations into what I do, using technology platforms.” They have become better teachers, speaking in the form of preparation although before they were excellent at teaching face-to-face because now, they have acquired technological skills; this has positively impacted their students since they may have more options, more tools in their learning. Taking into account that the students will be professional teachers in a few years ahead, they have had the opportunity to have an example lived in their teachers and more than the intellectual subject, the teachers transmitted them courage and tools for their future classes, and that as teachers we will always have to find a way to solve problems and be flexible to adapt to the context in the best possible way and as quickly as possible. “The teacher has been variously referred to as an artist and an architect; a scientist and a psychologist; a manager and a mentor; a controller and a counselor; a sage on the stage; a guide on the side; and more.” Kumaravadivelu (2003)

Finally, we can say that even though education mediated by virtuality has been an abrupt change for all educational actors since it forced them to change their practices and methodologies for new technology platforms, walking blindly through all the change, but it is important to stand out that all these changes have brought a satisfactory reward for teaching practices and their professional identity, their adaptation and the desire to continue improving to be able to give their students a better education, teaching all participants to value interaction with the actors of the educational context.

All of this reaffirms that teachers are not obliged to know everything. However, they must be in constant learning and learning about everything that surrounds them, investigating their pedagogical practices; this is their field since educators are called to educate themselves to educate others. Consequently, we must understand that education demands a much more critical and reflective society that is in search of transformations for the benefit of students. It can also be concluded that the vast field of education can be shaken because we live in a complex and changing world and society.

4.2 Conclusions and recommendations.

Education mediated by virtual has been an abrupt change for all educational actors since it forced them to change their practices and methodologies for new technology platforms, walking blindly through all the change, but it is important stand out that all these changes have brought a satisfactory reward for teaching practices and their professional identity, their adaptation and the desire to continue improving to be able to give their students a successfully solution to implement a better education, teaching all participants to value interaction with the actors of the educational context.

In addition, the Luis Amigo Catholic University and the government should provide new regulations and policies that work with educational strategies to continue implementing meaningful learning for students due to the new context that allows them to return to educational places, whether they are kindergartens, schools, and universities that also maintain the virtual classes.

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Appendix

Questions that we implemented to accomplish our objectives.

- ◆ How has been your pedagogical experience at the University?
- ◆ How has been your experience as a coordinator?
- ◆ After the pandemic, does the university provide you with some rules, laws to guide your classes? Those rules changed?
- ◆ What strategies have managers implemented so that the English program can be carried out in times of pandemic?
- ◆ What do you think about this contingency, like it going to help us or it will be hard for us as teachers?
- ◆ How have you handled the situation of the pandemic in your classes?
- ◆ Through the virtual modality, what do you consider to be a good way to promote English learning in this pandemic?
- ◆ Do you prefer virtual or face-to-face classes?
- ◆ As a political teacher, what have been the advantages and disadvantages that the pandemic has brought to the teaching of a second language?