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The Effect of Time Distribution in EFL Online Teaching on Learners' Proficiency and Perceptions

MA Dissertation

MA in Advanced English Studies

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Abstract

Language exposure in the classroom plays an important role in the effectiveness, development, and improvement of foreign language (FL) teaching and learning methods and approaches. Therefore, studying how exposure is distributed in time is helpful to understand and determine how learners' performance might be affected when more or less intensity of instruction is provided over a period of time. Although there has been a broad research interest in time distribution of L2 learning, it is important now to investigate how the use of online technologies in virtual environments relates to spaced and massed learning or if the results found in previous research are likely to be the same. The present study investigates how time distribution affects L2 online instruction. It also aims at determining what the effects of time distribution are in the learners' receptive and productive language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Likewise, the study intends to analyze the learners' perceptions of spaced and massed online learning. Two groups of participants were instructed in a 60-hour EFL class using the same materials, learning methods, and instructor. One group was intensively instructed for two months and the other was extensively taught for four months. At the beginning and the end of the instructional period, students were assessed on the four skills using the same international proficiency test and a perception questionnaire was carried out at the end of the instructional period. Results indicate no significant differences between the groups in any of the assessed skills or total scores. This suggests that time distribution (intensive vs. extensive instruction) did not have a significant impact on language skill development in the online environment., although within-group significant differences emerged in the case of speaking skills in the intensive course. Participants' perceptions highlighted the positive influence of time distribution on their proficiency results, with students appreciating the continuity and consistency of intensive courses and the flexibility and focus of extensive courses. Further research with larger sample sizes, longer instructional periods, and complementary assessment procedures is recommended to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between time distribution and language skill development in virtual settings.

Key Words:

Online learning, time distribution, foreign language instruction, EFL development, spaced learning, massed learning, perceptions

1. Introduction and Justification

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has always paid close attention to studying the role of exposure in the classroom (Rogers, 2021). Its effect on learning is certainly crucial for the development and improvement of new and alternative teaching methods and approaches. For that reason, recent studies have focused on analyzing how the distribution of time might affect learners' performance (Muñoz, 2012).

The present paper will shed light on the effects of time distribution on the linguistic skill development of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in online environments as well as their perceptions regarding the impact of intensive and extensive instruction. While there is some research on the spacing effect and time distribution in traditional classroom settings (Bird, 2010; Collins and White, 201; Serrano, 2011; White and Turner, 2005), there is limited research specifically focusing on online language learning environments. By examining the effects of time distribution in an online context, this study fills a gap in the literature and provides valuable insights into language learning in virtual settings. With the fast advance of technology and the increasing popularity of online language courses, understanding the role of time distribution in online instruction is crucial. EFL teachers, curriculum designers and educational institutions can benefit from the findings of this study when designing their courses and determining the optimal time distribution to maximize their students' language skill improvements.

The paper will be organized as follows. Initially, the goals and the research questions in this study are addressed. A review of the main literature relevant to the study is then

presented emphasizing cognitive psychology and SLA literature on time distribution. Online instruction literature and previous studies about perceptions are also discussed. Thereafter, the methodology implemented in the study is explained by describing the participants, the materials and the procedure followed. Next, the results and findings obtained are presented. Finally, a discussion and conclusion section analyses and interprets the results previously found based on the research questions presented at the beginning of the paper. Limitations are acknowledged and further lines of research are proposed too.

2. Goals of the Study and Research Questions

The goal of the present study is to see how time distribution affects L2 learning in an online teaching environment. More specifically, it aims at determining what the effects of time distribution are on the receptive and productive language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) of B1 students of EFL. Likewise, the study intends to analyze the learners' perceptions of spaced and massed online learning. The study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) What are the effects of time distribution on the development of EFL students' language skills in online environments?
- (2) What are the EFL students' perceptions of their linguistic development concerning time distribution and their general language learning experience?

Improvement is expected to happen in both groups, but a possible better performance in the intensive group (Group A) is predicted due to previous literature findings favoring shorter and intensive spacing lessons to be more beneficial (Rogers, 2021). The extensive group (Group B) might also report improvements as longer spacing periods could promote more independent practice according to previous cognitive psychology studies (Rohrer, 2015; Rogers, 2017). The study intends to understand and somehow reconcile the equivocal findings between SLA and Cognitive Psychology concerning time distribution.

With respect to the second research question and given the emphasis on the positive aspects of online learning in previous studies, it is expected that students will have positive perceptions of online learning concerning time distribution (Nhun & Yen, 2022). Some students might also find some challenges regarding online instruction (Yufhita et. Al, 2023) and as there is a lack of literature on perceptions of online time distribution, the study might find some unknown perceptions on this regard.

3. Theoretical Framework

Time distribution has become an influential factor to study the effectiveness of L2 instruction. On the one hand, *Distributed learning*, also referred to as *input-spacing*, is defined as the degree to which learning/practice takes place over multiple training sessions; while *massed learning*, on the other, happens when practice is concentrated or compressed on a single session (Rogers, 2021). The *spacing effect* makes reference to a manifest superiority of *distributed* over *massed* learning in terms of learning and retention (Rohrer, 2015; Rogers, 2017). SLA literature also suggests that intensive or concentrated teaching

have been shown to be highly effective for students' language development (Serrano, 2012). That is the reason why intensive language learning has become a well-known language instruction pattern in adult education and language training for business and universities (Serrano & Muñoz, 2007). However, there does not seem to be a consensus between Cognitive Psychology and SLA literature regarding time distribution in EFL instruction.

3.1 Cognitive Psychology Literature on Time Distribution

The spacing effect has been found to be highly effective in verbal learning. Several studies have investigated this effect, including those conducted by Delaney and Knowles (2005), Seabrook et al. (2005), and Toppino et al. (2002). In such studies, participants were presented with lists of words and were later tested on their recall of those terms. The recall tasks included both cued-memory tasks, where retrieval cues were provided, and free recall tasks. The time intervals between the learning sessions and tests varied across the studies. The results showed a significant spacing effect in both free recall and cued recall tasks, indicating better recall for spaced repetitions compared to massed repetitions.

Toppino et al. (2002) conducted one experiment with 54 introductory psychology students from Villanova University. They focused on the recall of items belonging to three different sets. One set included words that were presented once, another set involved words repeated three times in quick succession (massed repetitions), and the third set consisted of words repeated with spaced sequences (separated by three or four intervening words). Consistent with previous results, the findings revealed that spaced items were recalled

significantly more accurately than massed items. Furthermore, there were significant differences favoring repeated items over items presented only once.

When it comes to analyzing foreign language vocabulary learning, some authors including Pavlik and Anderson (2005) have studied the effects of spacing on retention using word pairs. 40 participants from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, mostly college students, were presented Japanese-English pairs with varying numbers of intervening presentations, and retention was assessed after one or seven days. In the initial session, wider spacing led to worse performance. However, in a subsequent session after seven days, wider spacing resulted in less forgetting. Participants also showed better retention at the one-day interval compared to the seven-day interval.

Bahrick and Hall (2005) studied undergraduate students' learning of Swahili-English word pairs across different training schedules. These schedules included all-in one-day massed sessions, a one-day between-session interval, and a 14-day between-session interval. Performance was assessed at the end of each session and 14 days after the last session. Results showed similar performance at the end of the first session for all groups. However, in sessions 2-4, the massed and one-day interval groups performed better than the 14-day interval group, suggesting forgetting between sessions for the more spaced schedule. Importantly, when participants were tested 14 days after the last session, both the one-day interval and the 14-day interval groups outperformed the massed group, indicating the detrimental effect of massed practice on long-term retention.

Overall, most experiments in cognitive psychology indicate that when participants learn something and then encounter it again after other items or in spaced-out sessions, they are more likely to remember it in both immediate and delayed tests compared to when they repeat it in a short period of time or without much spacing. Essentially, the more time and space there is between repetitions or learning sessions, the better a person remembers what they have learned. According to Serrano (2012), the explanation of why learning is enhanced when repetitions occur in spaced rather than in massed sequences might be given by *encoding variability theories*, *deficient processing theories* and *study-phase retrieval theories*. Encoding variability theories suggest that when two items are spaced apart, they are more likely to be stored in different ways in people's memory (Verkoeijen et al., 2004). Deficient processing theories indicate that spaced items are remembered better than massed items due to a deeper processing as there is much time (Mammarella et al., 2002); and study-phase retrieval theories propose that the first presentation of an item needs to be retrieved for subsequent repetitions to be beneficial. If the spacing between presentations is too wide, retrieval may not occur, and the second presentation does not serve as a repetition (Verkoeijen et al., 2005).

Having said that, it is also important to highlight that more spacing is not necessarily better under all circumstances as there is a limit to the effectiveness of spacing between repetitions (Serrano, 2012). Moreover, Serrano lists a series of factors that interact with time distribution and should not be omitted, namely paraphrased vs. verbatim repetitions that refers to the lack of spacing effect in the former; complexity of the material because the spacing effects are minimized for more complex items and structures; the possibility of retrieval of the first presentation, i.e. massed distributions exhibit greater benefits for learning

when the spacing between presentations is excessively wide; and the retention interval that refers to short retention intervals in which massed items are better recalled.

3.2 Second Language Acquisition Literature on Time Distribution

Frequent linguistic exposure and repetition of items and structures have been presented as essential to second language acquisition, particularly in the automatization of language skills (Ellis, 2002; DeKeyser, 2007; Segalowitz, 2010; Segalowitz & Hulstijn, 2005). Despite the benefits found, the ideal type of input repetition or exposure in relation to whether it is spaced or massed remains unclear (Serrano, 2012). That is why some authors have analyzed time distribution in language learning following the cognitive psychology framework, but also some exploratory studies in Second Language Acquisition have been carried out.

In the first place, a highly recognized research study carried out by Bird (2010) is often cited to exemplify the benefits of distributed over massed learning in the SLA field. He conducted a study to investigate how the spacing of learning sessions affected the learning of English grammar as a second language. The study involved 38 university students who were Malay native speakers and had an intermediate level of English proficiency. The participants were trained to differentiate between different verb forms in English (past simple vs. present perfect and present perfect vs. past perfect). The study had a pretest, posttest, delayed posttest design. The participants were divided into two groups, with one group studying the past simple/present perfect materials with short spacing between sessions and the present perfect/past perfect materials with long spacing. The other group had the order of materials and spacing conditions reversed. There were five training sessions in total, with

short-spaced conditions having a three-day interval between sessions and long-spaced conditions having a 14-day interval. Two post tests were conducted, one after seven days and another after 60 days, to assess the participants' retention of the grammar rules.

The results showed that both spacing conditions led to significant improvements in performance from the pretest to the seven-day delayed posttest, with no significant differences between the two spacing conditions. However, at the 60-day delayed posttest, the group with the three-day spacing showed a significant decrease in retention, while the group with the 14-day spacing did not. Therefore, the group with the 14-day spacing performed significantly better than the group with the three-day spacing. Thus, the study found that the spacing between training sessions influenced the durability of learning L2 grammar. Longer spacing intervals between sessions resulted in better long-term retention. These findings can be associated with the studies in cognitive psychology previously mentioned that have also examined the effects of time distribution. Nonetheless, Bird's investigation had a focus on particular structures and not on skill acquisition (Serrano, 2012). The present study focuses on language skills rather than on particular items or grammar structures.

Some suggestions to replicate this study have noted the benefits it might have for teachers and learners who want to optimize their instruction and study time. Rogers (2021), for instance, has recommended using the same procedures and materials but involving different learners, such as younger or older students with different native languages. He has also advised keeping the original study intact but focusing on different aspects of grammar at various levels of complexity. This might help, according to him, to understand how the complexity of the material affects the benefits of spaced practice. Additionally, studies could

explore different learning tasks that are more contextualized and meaningful, aligning with current language teaching approaches. It would also be beneficial to investigate a wider range of time intervals between study sessions and post-tests, as previous studies have examined only a limited range. Varying these intervals can help determine the optimal spacing schedule for learning.

Likewise, there have also been classroom-based exploratory studies in the SLA field that have examined language gains in L2 intensive courses and regular L2 classes. Spada and Lightbown (1989) conducted one of the first large-scale studies consisting of 1000 participants in Quebec to examine the effect of intensive English instruction. They compared students in grade 5 and 6 who received intensive English classes with students in the same grade receiving regular instruction and older students who had received a similar number of hours of instruction. The students in the intensive English classes performed significantly better in language tests and were more motivated to learn and practice English. Similarly, White and Turner (2005) compared the oral production skills of students in two groups to analyze regular and intensive instruction in Canada. The students in the intensive course showed a significant advantage in their performance. However, one of the limitations this study had was the lack of preciseness in terms of time distribution since there was an increase in time concentration in the intensive instruction class.

Collins et al. (1999) studied three types of intensive English programs. Those programs had different durations: 10 months with spaced classes (distributed), 5 months of intensive classes (massed), and 5 months of intensive classes with additional study outside of class (massed plus). They wanted to compare how well students performed in those

programs, so they used three types of tests: a yes/no vocabulary test, a listening comprehension test with some reading, and a written narrative test. The statistical analysis of the results showed that the learners in the massed programs (especially the massed plus program) had some significant advantages. However, there were two factors that made it challenging to determine the exact benefits of the different program durations. Firstly, the massed programs had more total hours of instruction due to the way the school year was organized (approximately 100 hours more). Secondly, the massed program had stricter enrollment criteria compared to the other two programs, which means the student populations in the three programs may not have been entirely comparable.

In another study by Collins and White (2011), they analyzed two Canadian intensive programs with the same number of hours of instruction (400 hours) but different time distributions. In the concentrated program, students received focused English instruction after completing their French curriculum in the first semester of the year. In the distributed program, the hours of instruction were spread throughout the entire academic year, with students receiving full days of English alternating with full days of French. The intervals of instructional time examined were 100 hours (Time 1), 200 hours (Time 2), 300 hours (Time 3), and 400 hours (Time 4). They also included a pretest to account for initial proficiency. The statistical analysis comparing the two program types revealed similar performance across most measures over time, with any differences favoring learners in the more concentrated program. The authors argue that the findings do not necessarily indicate that concentrating all intensive English hours in one semester is more effective than distributing them in "mini-intensives." Firstly, the differences between the two program types were generally small in terms of their impact. Additionally, certain variations in the teaching

approach employed in each program could account for some of the results. Taking these factors into account, Collins and White (2011) assert that both program types are effective in facilitating English learning.

3.3 Equivocal Findings between SLA and Cognitive Psychology Literature

The question of why the findings about time distribution seem to be so different in SLA and cognitive psychology appeals for a convincing answer. There have been several explanations noting the type of testing, the methodology and the role of retention in the experiments. Serrano (2012) explained that in cognitive psychology experiments, participants often memorize specific items and repeat them exactly. However, in classroom settings, rote learning is less common, and repetitions of items and structures are not exact or continuous. Concentrated repetitions can lead to loss of concentration and motivation, resulting in deficient processing and learning. She also explains that classroom instruction discourages rote learning and promotes more meaningful learning experiences.

Another difference is the type of tests used in the investigations. On the one hand, cognitive psychology tests usually assess declarative memory, focusing on specific types of knowledge. On the other, in SLA studies integrative tests are used, which require different types of knowledge and skills. Integrative tests are more complex and may show different effects of time distribution compared to discrete point tests. Complex tasks may show less significant spacing effects, as suggested by some researchers (Serrano, 2012). Additionally, the distinction between practice of components (e.g., vocabulary and grammar) and practice of skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) plays a role (DeKeyser, 2007). Spaced practice

of components may be better, as seen in cognitive psychology experiments, but massed or intensive practice of skills can still be efficient, as shown in SLA studies (Serrano, 2012).

Retention is another important factor. Most SLA studies test learners immediately after the course, which results in short retention intervals. Short retention intervals can lead to recency effects, where recent learning is better remembered and performed. Learners in intensive courses may benefit from this recency effect. However, long-term retention is not often examined in SLA studies, and it is possible that gains from massed programs may not be maintained over time (Collins & White, 2011; Serrano, 2011; Serrano & Muñoz, 2007).

Study-phase retrieval theories might also be of some help to reconcile the discrepancies found in distributed and massed instruction studies carried out by SLA experts and cognitive psychologists. If the spacing between sessions is too wide, retrieval may not occur, and the second presentation does not serve as a repetition. In some studies comparing intensive and non-intensive instruction, the spacing between sessions in regular courses may be too wide. When items, structures, or patterns reappear after a long interval, students may not recall the initial presentations, leading to different outcomes in performance (Serrano, 2012).

3.4 Recent Research on Time Distribution

When it comes to a more local context, a study focused on adult learners was developed by Serrano and Muñoz (2007), who examined the progress of Spanish-Catalan bilinguals in English language development across different program types in Barcelona. The researchers

compared 76 learners in three types of programs, all providing the same number of English instruction hours (110 hours). The extensive program (22 learners) offered 4 hours per week, the semi-intensive program (33 learners) provided 10 hours per week, and the intensive program (21 learners) involved 25 hours per week of English instruction. The learners took a pretest at the beginning and a post-test at the end of the course, which included tasks related to listening comprehension, sentence conversion, cloze exercises, and reading comprehension. When the researchers analyzed the data comparing the three program types, they did not find any statistically significant differences. However, when they looked at the progress within each group, they discovered that learners in the two intensive programs showed significant improvements in all tasks, while those in the extensive program only showed significant gains in the cloze test. The researchers interpreted this finding as a positive effect of concentrating more time on learning English (L2).

Serrano (2011) is another influential and highly cited research. In Rogers' (2021) words, "this study can be viewed as the culmination of a body of research stretching back to the 1980s that has investigated distribution of learning at the curricular level" (p.428). The researcher conducted a study comparing a short, intensive language course with a longer, more extensive course at the University of Barcelona. The participants were 87 university-age students at the intermediate and advanced proficiency level. The intensive course lasted for four and a half weeks during the summer term, with classes meeting five days a week for five hours each day (25 hours per week). The extensive course spanned the entire academic year, with classes meeting twice a week for two-hour sessions (four hours per week), totaling 110 hours of instruction. The study used a pretest/posttest design and collected data through proficiency tests, written tasks, and oral narration tasks. For intermediate-level students, the

results showed that the intensive course led to significantly higher gains in several aspects of language development, particularly in listening, sentence conversion, and reading tasks related to vocabulary knowledge. However, there were no significant differences in cloze exercises or reading comprehension. In terms of writing, only lexical complexity showed a significant difference, while no differences were observed in spoken performance. For advanced learners, there were no significant differences between the two course types in general proficiency, writing, or speaking performance. Overall, the study suggests that learners with lower proficiency levels may benefit more from intensive instruction, while advanced learners do not experience the same degree of benefit.

Opportunities for replication of this study would help the results of this investigation to broaden and nourish the SLA field. In the first place because the analysis provided was given based merely on intermediate and advanced learners. This finding suggests that intensive instruction may be more beneficial at lower proficiency levels. Future replications could examine, then, spacing effects in pre intermediate or lower proficiency levels to gain a better understanding of its impact. The present investigation explores pre intermediate proficiency levels of participants. In the same way, replication studies should also document the nature of classroom instruction and consider methodological approaches, training materials, and students' learning habits (Rogers, 2021). This qualitative dimension would help assess the internal validity of the study and understand the role of instructional factors in observed differences. Additionally, gathering data on students' language habits outside the classroom can provide insights into how formal and informal language exposure influences proficiency development (Rogers, 2021).

More recent research examining the effects of spacing on the learning of grammar include Kasproicz et al. (2019), who investigated if distribution of practice and language analytic ability moderated the effectiveness of explicit, input-based grammar instruction for young English learners of French (aged 8 to 11). Their results indicated minimal differences in performance between shorter (3.5-day) and longer (7-day) practice schedules when assessing the outcome measures employed. Serfaty and Serrano (2022) studied lag effects in two session intervals ISI (1-day or 7-day intersession Interval) in the learning of second language (L2) grammar of English learners (aged 10 to 18) and inquired if lag effects could be explained by other sources of difficulty. The results demonstrated that the intervals did not have a significant overall effect, whereas the retention interval (RI) did have a significant main effect. Moreover, longer lags resulted in significantly higher scores for learners who exhibited faster learning abilities and had higher proficiency levels. Conversely, shorter lags were associated with significantly higher scores for learners who demonstrated slower learning abilities and had lower proficiency levels. Suzuki (2017) and Suzuki and DeKeyser (2017) analyzed optimal learning schedules for second language (L2) acquisition of a morphological structure and wanted to investigate if distributed practice worked better than massed practice for proceduralization of grammatical knowledge in learners of Japanese as a second language in oral production. The findings indicated that massed practice resulted in accurate utterances comparable to those achieved through distributed practice. Additionally, it was observed that massed practice might lead to quicker utterances compared to distributed practice.

With regard to vocabulary acquisition and time distribution, Koval (2022) examined the contribution of the double mechanism of favorable retrieval during study to the lag effect

in foreign vocabulary learning from L2 (Finnish) to L1 (English) retrieval practice. Her results suggested the advantages of spacing out L2 to L1 retrieval practice are driven by successful and effortful retrieval, indicating that the benefits rely on the effectiveness of the retrieval process, even when immediate feedback is provided. Likewise, Nakata and Elgort (2021) contrasted the effect of massed and spaced distributions on second language vocabulary learning from reading in Japanese speakers of English. Their findings showed that spaced learning had an advantage over massed learning when it came to remembering meanings and matching meanings with their corresponding forms in the post-tests. However, it was observed that a similar effect of semantic priming occurred regardless of whether an item was encountered in the massed or spaced distribution. Rogers and Cheung (2020, 2021) and Serrano and Huang (2018, 2021) have aimed to analyze an effective learning schedule for second language vocabulary within a classroom setting and examine the effect of different schedules of repeated reading practice on intentional vocabulary learning. The findings showed that the spaced-short format resulted in better learning of the presented items. This suggests that the influence of time intervals between learning sessions (lag effects) may be reduced by factors such as age, learning context, and teaching methods. Besides, short-spaced repeated reading sessions had a significantly more positive effect on vocabulary learning on both immediate and delayed posttest than the long-spaced sessions (Serrano & Huang, 2021).

Consequently, it is possible to affirm spacing studies in SLA have gained attention in recent years, drawing on research from psychology and with a significant increase in studies examining spacing effects on grammar and vocabulary learning. However, authors like Rogers (2022) point out that the findings of these studies have not provided clear support

for longer spaced conditions being superior to shorter spaced conditions. He also states some studies favor distributed learning conditions (e.g., Bird, 2010; Rogers, 2015), while others show advantages for more intensive conditions (e.g., Rogers & Cheung, 2020; Suzuki, 2017).

The most recent meta-analysis examining the effects of spaced time on second language learning was performed by Kim and Webb (2022). They researched previous studies adding up to 48 experiments and involving 3411 participants. The goal of their investigation was to compare the effects of spaced vs. massed practice, longer vs. shorter spacing intervals, and equal vs. expanding spacing intervals. Kim and Webb (2002) analyzed immediate and delayed posttests to calculate the mean effect sizes associated with these different conditions. The findings revealed spacing to have a significant and medium-to-large effect on second language learning. In addition, the study found that equal spacing and expanding spacing intervals were statistically equivalent and the variability in the spacing effect across studies was accounted for by methodological factors such as the learning target, number of sessions, type of practice, activity type, feedback timing and retention interval. Besides, in immediate posttests, shorter spacing intervals were as effective as longer spacing intervals. In delayed posttests, however, longer spacing intervals proved to be more effective than shorter spacing intervals. Authors like Carpenter (2017) have remarked on this matter by suggesting it is plausible that language proficiency benefits following regular courses vs. intensive courses might not come out on immediate tests.

The literature review examined the role of time distribution and its implications for second language acquisition. The findings of Cognitive Psychology studies consistently

showed that spaced repetitions lead to better recall compared to massed repetitions in both immediate and delayed tests. Factors such as encoding variability, deeper processing, and study-phase retrieval theories contribute to the enhanced learning effect of spaced repetitions. The SLA literature revealed equivocal findings compared to cognitive psychology studies, attributed to differences in testing, instructional methodology, and retention intervals. Recent research highlighted the benefits of spaced practice in language learning, particularly in terms of long-term retention. Overall, the optimal spacing schedule for learning and the interaction of various factors require further investigation.

3.5 Online Instruction and Time Distribution

In the current educational landscape, teachers are being confronted with the necessity of transitioning from traditional face-to-face instruction to the contemporary virtual teaching mode. This shift poses a significant challenge for teachers, particularly those who are accustomed to the traditional approach (Jacinto & Alieto, 2020). That is the reason why analyzing and understanding the role of online teaching as a means of instruction in massed and distributed lessons plays an important role to see if its effects resemble or differ from those found in in-person instruction. As it has been noted in the introduction, no studies were found to have shown the effects of intensive and extensive instructions in online or digital environments. However, some important clarifications and conceptions are presented here to understand and delimit the scope of the present exploratory research study.

Online educational technologies have undoubtedly thrived within the education system. The recent advancements in technology have had, in consequence, significant

impacts on various aspects of human life, including business, governance, and lifestyle (Wen & Kim, 2020). Numerous online educational technologies have been developed to enhance and streamline the learning processes of students. Examples of such technologies include Google Classroom, Schoology, Moodle, and Frog VLE. Through virtual classrooms, teachers can upload relevant learning materials and assignments, while students can access these materials and submit their assignments using platforms. Additionally, the development of mobile applications for certain virtual classrooms allows teachers and students to access the platform conveniently at any time and from anywhere (Wen & Kim, 2020).

In regard to EFL, the continuous development of technological tools offers significant opportunities for learners that might, at the same time, have the potential to reshape the structure, efficiency and effectiveness of language learning (Hazaymeh, 2021). Hazaymeh (2021) has also identified different practical advantages such as faster distribution of course contents and novel teaching materials to share knowledge and social exchanges. In the same way, Lo & Mok (2019) found that the advancement of digital learning capabilities, particularly through the use of games and interactive digital ecosystems have triggered a dynamic digital environment that is engaging, meaningful and adaptable.

For the practical and academic purposes of this study, online learning is understood as instruction that occurs when students have access to all their teaching and learning materials in a virtual environment (Ní Shé et al., 2019) typically through an institution's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). That means communication between students, teachers and the university occurs electronically. Ní Shé et al. (2019) emphasize, therefore, that asynchronous and synchronous communication methods that include emails and

messaging systems and teaching are delivered over the internet. They also state technology is frequently utilized to improve teaching through interactive tasks and materials such as videos and screencasts. The term is subject to interpretation and may also depend on the institution and the course context pursued by the student (Ní Shé et al., 2019). Online learning also poses a significant challenge for teachers and educators in general when facilitating meaningful online tasks. The emergence of numerous virtual learning platforms has revolutionized the present and future landscape of education. That is why lecturers must proactively anticipate this shift by contemplating effective online learning strategies that promote the internationalization of diverse competences students will need in their future (Sukmawati et al., 2022). Furthermore, educators need to have distinct and specific pedagogical skills for online learning different from the traditional face-to-face classroom instruction.

In addition to the challenges presented by online education, another element that came to hasten the adoption of online learning was the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020; a worldwide health issue that affected not only world economies and people's lifestyles, but also had a disruptive and profound impact on English-language education (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021) providing paradoxically a distinct occasion to understand the possible affordances of English online teaching. As there was a rapid expansion of synchronous online teaching triggered by the pandemic, lessons taught by video-conferencing software (VCS) became widespread although it had been already used since the early 2000s; and popular platforms and applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Blackboard Collaborate were popularized.

To sum up, the educational landscape is undergoing a significant transformation with the widespread adoption and conceptualization of new technologies and pedagogical models. For instance, students having the option to join a class synchronously remotely opens up the door for research to analyze the role of time distribution in online contexts. This emerging trend in education brings forth both challenges and opportunities for English Language Teaching (ELT). As scholars delve into this rapidly evolving field, it is crucial to reflect on the lessons learned from collective experiences and responses to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in ELT since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021).

3.6 Perceptions on Online Instruction and Time Distribution

In relation to the study of students' perceptions within the field of SLA, it is important to highlight that their beliefs and attitudes have a significant impact on their motivation and engagement in their language learning process (Dörnyei, 2014). By analyzing perceptions, it is also possible to identify elements that facilitate or obstruct language learning. Therefore, decisions regarding better instructional practices and approaches can be made and curriculum development can be undoubtedly nourished. Moreover, students' perceptions of a supportive environment where they feel heard and included can result in enhanced motivation (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015). Church et. al (2001) conducted two studies with 208 and 297 undergraduate chemistry students aiming to explore the connection between students' perception of the classroom environment, their achievement goals, performance, and intrinsic motivation. The findings of their research revealed that students' perception of the classroom environment plays a significant role in shaping the achievement goals they adopt, and these

goals, in turn, directly impact their performance and intrinsic motivation. Likewise, Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015) affirm that EFL teachers must enhance learning outcomes and foster positive learning habits within the educational environment. Teachers can play, then, a significant role in shaping students' perceptions and attitudes towards learning through the implementation of challenging activities, engaging tasks with diverse options, and the creation of an enjoyable learning environment.

The learning environment is in constant change and has also been adapted to fulfill the world's education needs. New contexts using technology are now part of the online teaching world providing opportunities for research to explore students' conceptions of these new learning spaces. Recently, the widespread occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 expedited the implementation of online education and the necessity to enquire about students' perceptions about its methods, approaches and effectiveness. Some recent studies including Nhung and Yen's (2022) have emphasized that students express enjoyment in their learning experiences within online environments. Their study, which sought to understand English-majored students' perceptions about online learning, found that students appreciated the flexibility offered by this modality to learn from any location at their own pace. Additionally, online learning was found to promote independence and responsibility, as students were empowered to plan their own learning and set goals. They also had opportunities to evaluate their progress and took control of their learning (Nhung & Yen, 2022). Therefore, online learning was seen as a conducive environment to foster learner autonomy.

Likewise, Nafisah and Setianingsih (2022) studied higher education student's perceptions of online teaching implementation and found that they held a positive perception about it. Online learning was regarded as effective, motivating and efficient. There were also some concerns about technological aspects regarding internet connectivity and some reservations about the learning environment since the absence of direct supervision by instructors could have impacted the completion of assignments affecting their learning outcomes (Nafisah & Setianingsih, 2022). Another study conducted by Albiansyah et. al (2021) aiming at investigating EFL students' perception towards online English learning at a private vocational school affirmed that students expressed support for this type of learning as it was easy to use. However, most of them found online learning less appealing compared to face-to-face learning. They also identified drawbacks in terms of materials and interaction.

Yufhita et. al (2023) examined eleventh-grade students' perceptions regarding materials, assignments, and teachers' explanations in the context of online English language teaching and aimed to identify the challenges they encountered during instruction. Differently from previous studies, they affirmed overall success in online learning was lacking. Students found the materials provided to be challenging to comprehend. However, they expressed positive perceptions of the assignments and the teacher's explanations. Some of the obstacles faced by students included cognitive and personal factors, such as difficulties in understanding, insufficient explanations, low motivation, internet connectivity, environmental distractions, and limited study time.

Some other authors like Mather and Sarkans (2018) have also remarked the importance of training teachers in the transition between in-person and online training.

Therefore, it is crucial for higher educational institutions to prioritize professional development opportunities for faculty members. These opportunities should aim to enhance faculty members' understanding of online learning and equip them with the necessary skills to effectively manage virtual classrooms. Allocating funds on an ongoing basis is also vital to ensure that instructional tools and teaching methods used in both online and face-to-face instruction are up-to-date and aligned with student needs, thus promoting student success and satisfaction (Mather and Sarkans, 2018). Concerning time distribution and online instruction, no studies were found to show students' beliefs and perceptions on the effects of intensive and extensive instruction on online or digital environments.

In summary, analyzing students' attitudes and perceptions helps identify factors that facilitate or hinder language learning, leading to informed decisions regarding instructional practices and curriculum development. Creating a supportive learning environment where students feel heard and included enhances their motivation. Additionally, the implementation of online education, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, has further emphasized the need to understand students' opinions on that matter. Further research is consequently necessary to explore students' perceptions of new digital learning spaces and address challenges in online learning including time distribution and L2 exposure.

4. Methods

In order to answer the research questions, the study followed a mixed approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Two groups of participants (16 and 15 students) were instructed in a 60-hour ESL class using the same materials, methods, and instructor. One

group (Group A) was intensively instructed for two months and the other (Group B) was extensively taught for four months. At the beginning and the end of the instructional period, the 31 students were assessed using the same external test. Statistical analyses measured the effects of time distribution on the students' four language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. In addition, the participants' perceptions were gathered by means of a questionnaire designed for the students to respond at the end of the course.

4.1 Participants

As the study intends to analyze time distribution or the lag effects in spaced and massed learning, the study required two different groups of participants. The effects of time distribution on massed learning were analyzed with a first group consisting of 16 intermediate-level students of English whose native language is Spanish and decided to learn in an intensive online program at a public university language center. They took classes from Monday to Thursday with a two-daily-hour intensity. The effects of time distribution on spaced learning were analyzed with a second group consisting of 15 intermediate-level students of English whose native language is Spanish and also decided to learn in an extensive online program at the same language center. This course was held on a weekly basis on Saturdays and the lesson lasted 4 hours. Both groups were taking the same level with the same number of total hours (60). Based on the internal division of the continuing education courses of the university, the level was referred to as 3A, which corresponds to a pre intermediate stage (i.e. B1.1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

The first group added up to 9 males and 7 females between the ages of 18 to 58 years ($M=35$). None of them had ever lived in an English speaking country and it was not the first time they were studying English online. Only 2 students were taking a remote language course for the first time and 50% of students had taken in-person English classes before during one or two years of their life. The time spent by the students on virtual language education ranged between 2 months and 2 years.

The second group of students included 5 males and 10 females between the ages of 19 and 56 years ($M=29$). 13 students had never lived abroad in an English speaking country while 2 students had. Only 3 students were studying English online for the first time and none of them had taken in-person classes before in their life. The time spent by the students on virtual language education ranged between 6 months and 2 years.

The participants were taken from a specific university because of the accessibility of the researcher as an English teacher in the language center and the existence of both spaced and massed learning instructed classes in its curriculum.

4.2 Materials and procedures

In order to carry out the investigation in this university, permission was granted by both the general coordinator of the Continuing Education Program, which the language program depends on; and the English Language Program coordinator. In the same way, students were explained the goals and procedures of the study and they gave their consent by filling out an online form before all of the classes started (see Appendix A). They also completed a

biometric questionnaire to understand their language profile and trajectory (see Appendix A too). As the researcher is an online English teacher there, he was also given the authorization to teach both groups at the same time.

In order for both groups to be comparable in the study, it was necessary to know if the courses started at the same proficiency level. Although the language center has its own level organization and students take a placement test when they register the courses, an external and standardized test was necessary to guarantee all of the participants had been classified accordingly. Moreover, there were both new and old students in both groups who were there whether because of the internal placement of the center or because they had taken the previous levels there. That is why, to verify the students' proficiency level when they were enrolled in the course (Time 1), both groups took a sample version of the international language examination **B1 Preliminary** (formerly known as Cambridge English: Preliminary English Test or PET) provided by Cambridge University Press and Assessment (Appendix B). Their four linguistic skills were assessed before being intensively and extensively instructed. This test evaluates learners at their B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The exam was selected because it is not administered by the university and is different to its internal placement test. Besides, it is also an internationally validated, standardized and recognized English language examination. Another advantage *B1 Preliminary* offers is the scope of its results since they are not only given in numbers but also in a classification scale from A2 to B2 level.

The *B1 Preliminary* test consists of four sections designed to assess students' proficiency in English. The Reading section evaluates the ability to comprehend and extract

key information from various sources such as signs, newspapers, and magazines. It comprises six parts: Part 1 (Multiple choice), Part 2 (Matching), Part 3 (Multiple choice), Part 4 (Gapped text), Part 5 (Multiple choice cloze), and Part 6 (Open cloze). The Writing section examines the student's aptitude in using vocabulary and sentence structures accurately. It is divided into two parts: Part 1 (Writing an email) and Part 2 (Choice between an article or a story). The Listening section is composed of four parts. Part 1 and Part 2 entail multiple-choice questions, while Part 3 involves filling in gaps in a given passage. Part 4 concludes with multiple-choice questions as well. This section evaluates the students' ability to comprehend and follow spoken materials, including announcements and discussions about everyday topics. Similarly, the Speaking section encompasses four parts: Part 1 (Interview), Part 2 (Extended turn), Part 3 (Discussion), and Part 4 (General conversation). The speaking test is conducted in the presence of one or two other candidates and two examiners. It assesses the student's proficiency in spoken English through interactive conversations, where they ask and answer questions and discuss personal preferences. However, for the purpose of this study, the speaking test was conducted with only one examiner acting as the researcher due to logistical constraints. At Time 1 of the investigation, both groups were comparable in terms of proficiency level based on the results obtained in the pre-test administered before classes started. No significant differences were found between the average scores obtained by the participants in the Saturday and weekly courses (see the Results section).

Furthermore, both courses were taught online using the same curriculum, materials, activities, and instructor, who happened to be the researcher himself. The only existent difference in the courses was their time distribution. The course lasted two months for group A since it was taught two hours per day from Monday to Thursday and 4 months for group

B, as it was instructed during 4 hours in a row on Saturdays. At the end of the course (Time 2), students took another sample of the same ***B1 Preliminary*** examination (Appendix C). The objective was, then, to analyze how time distribution might have affected their proficiency in each of the skills tested, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Four main quantitative comparisons were done at the end of these tests. The first one was a comparison between the results obtained by group A and group B only in the first test. The second analysis compared the results obtained by both groups in the second test. The third comparison analyzed the within-group improvement of the two groups' results from Test 1 to Test 2; and the last contrast was established by comparing the gains from Test 1 to Test 2 between the two groups.

The collection of students' perceptions regarding time distribution was carried out through a questionnaire (Appendix D) administered at the conclusion of the instructional period. The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions, comprising 5 yes/no questions with corresponding open-ended questions, 2 closed questions, 3 open-ended questions, 1 ranking question, and 5 Likert scale statements. The yes/no questions aimed to assess students' positive and negative perceptions regarding the allocation of time in their own course modality, the alternative in-person course format, and the potential for practicing English outside of class. The closed questions inquired about the frequency of practice outside of sessions and the students' perceptions of skill improvement. The 3 open-ended questions sought information about the specific activities undertaken during the periods of practice outside of sessions, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of their classes, considering whether they were held daily or once a week. In the ranking question, participants were

required to prioritize their skills hierarchically based on their perceived level of improvement. The 5 Likert scale questions explored the same topics as the aforementioned questions, allowing students to express their opinions using a rating scale.

The questionnaire required both qualitative and quantitative techniques to fully analyze and interpret the data. On the one hand, the quantitative analysis of the Likert scale statements involved assigning numerical values to the response options and calculating summary statistics. The closed questions asking about time lapses of practice outside sessions and students' perceptions of skill improvement required quantifying and summarizing the responses using descriptive statistics, such as calculating percentages and averages; and the ranking question requiring participants to organize their skills based on perceived improvement involved assigning numerical values to the ranked items and calculating average ranks. On the other hand, the yes/no questions assessing students' positive and negative perceptions of time distribution with their corresponding arguments required a qualitative analysis in order to categorize and summarize their perceptions; and, the open-ended questions inquiring about the type of activities conducted during practice outside of sessions and the advantages and disadvantages of classes involved identifying common themes, patterns, and trends in students' responses.

5. Results

To address the research inquiries of this study, a mixed-methods approach was employed encompassing both quantitative and qualitative methods. The participants' proficiency levels were assessed using the Cambridge ***B1 Preliminary*** test administered at the beginning (Test

1) and at the end (Test 2) of the instructional period. In addition, the students' perceptions were collected by means of a questionnaire administered at the end of the instructional period.

5.1 Cambridge B1 Preliminary Test Results

The *B1 Preliminary* tests performed at the beginning (Appendix B) and end (Appendix C) of the instructional period assessed the four language skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. The scores were all graded over 100 points. At pre-test, there were 16 participants in Group A (weekly course) and 15 participants in Group B (Saturday course). At post-test only 11 students from group A and 14 students from group B remained in the study.

Four comparisons were conducted. The initial comparison involved contrasting the results obtained by group A and group B in the first test. The same comparison was performed to compare the results achieved by both groups in the second test. The third comparison explored the improvement within each group's results from Test 1 to Test 2. Lastly, a contrast was made by comparing the gains achieved by the two groups from Test 1 to Test 2.

5.1.1 Results Before Instruction in Groups A & B

Table 1 presents the group descriptives for reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills, and the total score before instruction. It is divided into Group A and Group B, with the corresponding number of participants (N), mean, median, standard deviation (SD), and standard error (SE) for each ability. An independent Samples t-test (Table 2) was used to

analyze the results of the *Preliminary* test before instruction in order to determine if it was possible to compare groups A and B.

Table 1: Group Descriptives - *Preliminary (Before instruction)*

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Reading	A	16	61.4	59.5	21.25	5.31
	B	15	67.4	66.0	16.24	4.19
Listening	A	16	58.3	58.0	21.46	5.37
	B	15	66.9	68.0	18.11	4.68
Writing	A	16	61.9	66.5	18.12	4.53
	B	15	64.8	65.0	7.02	1.81
Speaking	A	16	68.2	70.0	9.26	2.32
	B	15	64.7	63.0	4.69	1.21
Total	A	16	62.5	63.5	11.15	2.79
	B	15	66.0	67.0	8.68	2.24

Table 2: Independent Samples T-Test - *Preliminary (Before instruction)*

		Statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
Reading	Student's t	0.873	29.0	0.390	5.96	6.83
Listening	Student's t	1.213	29.0	0.235	8.68	7.16
Writing	Student's t	0.572	29.0	0.571	2.86	5.00
Speaking	Student's t	-1.321	29.0	0.197	-3.52	2.66
Total	Student's t	0.971	29.0	0.340	3.50	3.61

Note. $H_a: \mu_A \neq \mu_B$

As for reading, no significant differences between the two groups were found (Group A, $M=61.4$, $SD= 21.25$; Group B, $M=67.4$, $SD=16.24$; $t = 0.873$ (29), $p= 0.390$). Regarding the skill of listening, Group A had a mean score of 58.3 ($SD = 21.46$) while Group B obtained a higher mean, 66.9 ($SD = 18.11$). However, no statistically significant differences were found between the groups ($t= 1.213$ (29), $p = 0.235$). The results for writing skills showed no significant differences between the groups either (Group A, $M = 61.9$, $SD = 18.12$; Group B, $M = 64.8$, $SD = 7.02$; $t = 0.572$ (29), $p = 0.571$). As for the speaking ability, Group A achieved a mean score of 68.2 ($SD = 9.26$). In contrast, Group B had a lower, 64.7 ($SD = 4.69$). Yet again, no statistical significance was found between the groups ($t=-1.321$ (29), $p=0.971$). Before instruction, Group A had a total mean score of 62.5 ($SD = 11.15$), while Group B obtained a slightly higher mean, 66.0 ($SD = 8.68$). No statistically significant difference between the groups was found ($t = 0.971$ (29), $p = 0.340$).

Based on the group descriptives, it appears that Group B generally had higher mean scores compared to Group A in most skills (reading, listening, and writing), as well as the total scores. However, none of the t-tests reached statistical significance, as indicated by the obtained p-values. In summary, based on the results of the independent samples t-test, there was no significant difference in proficiency levels between the two groups before instruction. Consequently, both groups were considered similar and could be compared in the study.

5.1.2 Results After Instruction in Groups A & B

After the 60-hour instruction in their English class, participants carried out the *Preliminary* test again and an independent samples t-test (Table 4) was used again to compare the results

achieved by groups A and B. The table of descriptive statistics (Table 3) shows the number of participants (N), the mean, median, standard deviation (SD), and standard error (SE) for each ability and Table 4 describes the results of the t-test.

Table 3: Group Descriptives - Preliminary (After instruction)

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Reading (Post)	A	11	61.7	63.0	21.08	6.36
	B	14	69.6	70.5	15.74	4.21
Listening (Post)	A	11	54.2	44.0	25.26	7.62
	B	14	67.4	72.0	16.07	4.29
Writing (Post)	A	11	61.8	63.0	27.21	8.20
	B	14	70.0	73.0	12.22	3.26
Speaking (Post)	A	11	74.1	73.0	9.26	2.79
	B	14	69.0	70.0	4.77	1.28
Total (Post)	A	11	62.8	63.0	15.22	4.59
	B	14	68.9	71.0	8.24	2.20

Table 4: Independent Samples T-Test - Preliminary (After instruction)

		Statistic	Df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
Reading (Post)	Student's t	1.07	23.0	0.297	7.84	7.36
Listening (Post)	Student's t	1.60	23.0	0.124	13.25	8.29
Writing (Post)	Student's t	1.01 ^a	23.0	0.324	8.18	8.12
Speaking (Post)	Student's t	-1.78	23.0	0.088	-5.09	2.85
Total (Post)	Student's t	1.27	23.0	0.217	6.04	4.75

Note. $H_a: \mu_A \neq \mu_B$

^a Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

As for reading at post-test, no significant differences emerged between Group A ($M = 61.7$, $SD = 21.08$) and Group B ($M = 69.6$, $SD = 15.74$) ($t = 1.07$ (23), $p = 0.297$). Similarly,

in listening, participants in Group A had a mean score of 54.2 (SD = 25.26) and participants in Group B had a higher mean, 67.4 (SD = 16.07). Nonetheless, no statistically significant differences were found ($t = 1.60$ (23), $p = 0.124$). Concerning the writing skill, Group A obtained a mean score of 61.8 (SD = 27.21). On the other hand, Group B obtained a higher mean score, 70.0 (SD = 12.22). No significant differences were found between the groups ($t = 1.01$ (23), $p = 0.324$).

Differently from the other skills, the results for speaking showed Group A had a mean score of 74.1 (SD = 9.26) and Group B had a lower mean, 69.0 (SD = 4.77). But again, no statistical significance was encountered ($t = -1.78$ (23), $p = 0.088$). Regarding the total scores, Group A had a mean score of 62.8 (SD = 15.22) while Group B obtained a higher mean of 68.9 (SD = 8.24). A non-significant difference between the groups was found ($t = 1.27$ (23), $p = 0.217$).

In summary, after the 60-hour instruction in their English class, the independent samples t-tests showed no significant differences between Group A and Group B in their performance on the assessed abilities of reading, listening, writing, speaking, and the total scores. The mean differences observed were not statistically significant, suggesting that any observed variations could be due to chance.

5.1.3 Results Within Groups

Paired-samples t-tests were used to compare the results within groups A and B to analyze the students' improvement between Test 1 and Test 2.

5.1.3.1 Results Within Group A Before and After Instruction

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of the performance in Group A in each of the skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) of the *Preliminary* exam before and after receiving instruction. The total scores for each skill were also measured. The columns provide information on the number of participants (N), the mean (M), median (Mdn), standard deviation (SD), and standard error (SE) for each ability. A paired-samples t-test (Table 6) was conducted to contrast the students' improvement within the same group. Each row corresponds to a different skill, while the columns display the statistic, degrees of freedom (df), p-value (p), mean difference, and standard error (SE) of the difference.

Table 5: Descriptives - Results Group A (Before and After Instruction)

	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
<i>Reading - Pre</i>	11	62.1	63.0	24.71	7.45
<i>Reading - Post</i>	11	61.7	63.0	21.08	6.36
<i>Listening - Pre</i>	11	57.5	56.0	24.68	7.44
<i>Listening - Post</i>	11	54.2	44.0	25.26	7.62
<i>Writing - Pre</i>	11	61.7	68.0	21.67	6.53
<i>Writing - Post</i>	11	61.8	63.0	27.21	8.20
<i>Speaking - Pre</i>	11	68.0	70.0	9.84	2.97
<i>Speaking - Post</i>	11	74.1	73.0	9.26	2.79
<i>Total - Pre</i>	11	62.4	63.0	12.86	3.88
<i>Total - Post</i>	11	62.8	63.0	15.22	4.59

Table 6: Paired Samples T-Test - Results Group A (Before and After Instruction)

	statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
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<i>Reading - Pre</i>	<i>Reading - Post</i>	Student's t	-0.0995	10.0	0.923	-0.3636	3.66
<i>Listening - Pre</i>	<i>Listening - Post</i>	Student's t	-0.7160	10.0	0.490	-3.2727	4.57
<i>Writing - Pre</i>	<i>Writing - Post</i>	Student's t	0.0108	10.0	0.992	0.0909	8.43
<i>Speaking - Pre</i>	<i>Speaking - Post</i>	Student's t	2.3469	10.0	0.041	6.0909	2.60
<i>Total - Pre</i>	<i>Total - Post</i>	Student's t	0.2330	10.0	0.820	0.4545	1.95

Note. $H_a: \mu_{\text{Measure 1} - \text{Measure 2}} \neq 0$

The paired-samples t-test yielded non-significant pre to post differences for any skills in Group A except for the speaking skill (pre-test $M = 68.00$, $SD = 9.84$; post-test $M = 74.1$, $SD = 9.26$; $t = 2.34$ (10), $p = 0.041$), where Group A improved significantly.

5.1.3.2 Results Within Group B Before and After Instruction

The results of the tests presented per Group B before and after instruction are reported in the tables below. Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics in each ability and the total score. The columns show the number of participants (N), the mean (M), median (Mdn), standard deviation (SD), and standard error (SE) for each skill. Likewise, paired-samples t-tests for each skill and the total scores are presented in Table 8. Each row represents a different skill or the total score, and the columns show the statistic, degrees of freedom (df), p-value (p), mean difference, and standard error (SE) of the difference.

Table 7: Descriptives - Results Group B (Before and After Instruction)

	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
<i>Reading Pre</i>	14	65.5	66.0	15.02	4.01
<i>Reading Post</i>	14	69.6	70.5	15.74	4.21

<i>Listening Pre</i>	14	64.9	66.0	16.84	4.50
<i>Listening Post</i>	14	67.4	72.0	16.07	4.29
<i>Writing Pre</i>	14	64.4	64.0	7.13	1.91
<i>Writing Post</i>	14	70.0	73.0	12.22	3.26
<i>Speaking Pre</i>	14	64.5	63.0	4.82	1.29
<i>Speaking Post</i>	14	69.0	70.0	4.77	1.28
<i>Total Pre</i>	14	64.9	66.0	7.74	2.07
<i>Total Post</i>	14	68.9	71.0	8.24	2.20

Table 8: Paired Samples T-Test - Results Group B (Before and After Instruction)

			statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
<i>Reading Pre</i>	<i>Reading Post</i>	Student's t	0.981	13.0	0.345	4.07	4.15
<i>Listening Pre</i>	<i>Listening Post</i>	Student's t	0.769	13.0	0.456	2.57	3.34
<i>Writing Pre</i>	<i>Writing Post</i>	Student's t	1.853	13.0	0.087	5.57	3.01
<i>Speaking Pre</i>	<i>Speaking Post</i>	Student's t	3.769	13.0	0.002	4.50	1.19
<i>Total Pre</i>	<i>Total Post</i>	Student's t	2.276	13.0	0.040	4.00	1.76

Note. $H_a: \mu_{\text{Measure 1} - \text{Measure 2}} \neq 0$

The paired-samples t-test yielded non-significant pre to post differences for any skills in Group B except for the speaking skill and the total score. Regarding the speaking skill, the speaking post-test score (M= 69.0, SD= 4.77) is significantly higher than the pre-test score (M= 64.5, SD= 4.82) as the p-value indicates (t= 3.76 (13), p= 0.002). As for the total score, students in Group B improved significantly (t= 2.27 (13), p= 0.04) from pre-test (M= 64.9, SD= 7.74) to post-test (M= 68.9, SD= 8.24).

5.1.4 Gains in Performance: Group A vs. Group B

In order to analyze the gains in performance for Groups A and B, the difference between the students' scores in their *Preliminary* tests was calculated. This was done by subtracting the students' Test 1 scores from their Test 2 scores for each skill (listening, reading, writing and speaking). The same calculation was also done with the total scores in both tests. Table 9 presents the descriptive statistics for the gains in each ability and in total scores for each group. It is divided into Group A and Group B, with the corresponding number of participants (N), mean (M), median (Mdn), standard deviation (SD), and standard error (SE). An independent samples T-Test (Table 10) was also conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the gains in performance from Test 1 to Test 2 between the two groups.

Table 9: Group Descriptives - Gains in Performance (Group A vs. Group B)

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Reading (Gains)	A	11	-0.3636	-6.00	12.13	3.66
	B	14	4.07	3.50	15.53	4.15
Listening (Gains)	A	11	-3.2727	-8.00	15.16	4.57
	B	14	2.57	2.00	12.51	3.34
Writing (Gains)	A	11	0.0909	10.00	27.97	8.43
	B	14	5.57	4.00	11.25	3.01
Speaking (Gains)	A	11	6.0909	7.00	8.61	2.60
	B	14	4.50	3.00	4.47	1.19
Total Scores (Gains)	A	11	0.4545	0.00	6.47	1.95
	B	14	4.00	4.50	6.58	1.76

Table 10: Independent Samples T-Test - Gains in Performance (Group A vs. Group B)

		Statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
Reading (Gains)	Student's t	0.778	23.0	0.445	4.44	5.70
Listening (Gains)	Student's t	1.057	23.0	0.302	5.84	5.53
Writing (Gains)	Student's t	0.670 ^a	23.0	0.509	5.48	8.17
Speaking (Gains)	Student's t	-0.599 ^a	23.0	0.555	-1.59	2.66
Total Scores (Gains)	Student's t	1.348	23.0	0.191	3.55	2.63

Note. $H_a: \mu_A \neq \mu_B$

^a Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

It appears that group A generally experienced declines or minimal improvements in reading, listening, writing, and total scores, while group B showed improvements in those skills and overall scores. Yet, based on the results of the independent samples t-tests, there were no significant differences in the gains in performance between Group A and Group B for any of the skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) or the total scores. These findings indicate that the two groups showed similar improvements in their performance after receiving instruction.

5.2 Questionnaire Results

The students' perceptions on time distribution were collected by means of a questionnaire (Appendix D) answered at the end of the instruction period. The questionnaire had 16 questions (5 yes/no questions and their corresponding open questions, 2 closed questions, 3 open questions, 1 ranking question and 5 Likert scale statements). The yes/no questions

targeted the positive and negative perceptions of the students on time distribution of their own and the opposite course modality, and the alternative in-person course format as well as the potential English practice outside class. The closed questions asked about time lapses of practice outside the sessions and the students' perceptions of improvement in their skills. The 3 open questions asked about the type of activities developed in the lapses of practice outside the sessions, the advantages and disadvantages of their classes (whether it was every day or once a week). In the ranking question participants had to organize their skills hierarchically according to their perceptions of improvement. The 5 Likert scale questions targeted the same topics as in the questions. Eleven students from group A and 12 students from group B answered the questionnaire. The following analysis will first present the quantitative results of the Likert scale questions (Table 11) that will be afterwards complemented with the findings of the rest of the questions and divided into four sections: time distribution, online vs. face-to-face learning, language practices outside class and language skills improvement.

Table 11: Group Descriptives - Likert Scale Statements (*Group A vs. Group B*)

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Statement 1	A	11	4.64	5.00	0.505	0.1521
	B	12	3.75	4.00	1.215	0.351
Statement 2	A	11	2.27	2.00	1.489	0.4491
	B	12	3.42	3.50	1.084	0.313
Statement 3	A	11	4.36	4.00	0.674	0.2033
	B	12	4.08	4.00	0.793	0.229
Statement 4	A	11	4.45	5.00	0.688	0.2073
	B	12	4.33	4.50	0.888	0.256

	A	11	4.91	5.00	0.302	0.0909
Statement 5	B	12	4.08	5.00	1.240	0.358

Statement 1: (Group A) *I am improving my English level because I am studying it Monday to Thursday every day.* (Group B) *I am improving my English level because I am studying it on Saturdays every week.*

Statement 2: (Group A) *If I took the Saturday course my English level would advance faster.* (Group B) *If I took the weekly course (Mondays to Thursdays) my English level would advance faster.*

Statement 3: *More hours of classes per week would help my English level advance faster.*

Statement 4: *If I took the in-person course my English level would advance more.*

Statement 5: *If I don't practice outside the class, my proficiency level doesn't improve as much.*

Table 12: Independent Samples T-Test - Likert Scale Statements (Group A vs. Group B)

		Statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
Statement 1	Student's t	2.244 ^a	21.0	0.036	0.886	0.395
Statement 2	Student's t	-2.120	21.0	0.046	-1.144	0.540
Statement 3	Student's t	0.909	21.0	0.374	0.280	0.308
Statement 4	Student's t	0.364	21.0	0.720	0.121	0.333
Statement 5	Student's t	2.147 ^a	21.0	0.044	0.826	0.385

Note. $H_a: \mu_A \neq \mu_B$

^a Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Descriptive statistics presented in Table 11 illustrate the mean scores (M), medians (Mdn), standard deviations (SD), and standard errors (SE) for each statement within both groups. For Statement 1, Group A students reported a mean score of 4.64 (SD = 0.505), indicating a relatively high level of agreement, whereas Group B students had a slightly lower mean score of 3.75 (SD = 1.215). It seems that the majority of Group A thinks they are improving their English level because they are studying it every day while Group B participants think they are improving their English level because they are studying once a

week to a lower extent. Yet, the results of the independent samples t-test indicated a significant difference between the two groups for Statement 1 ($t = 2.244$ (21), $p = 0.036$) in favour of Group A.

In Statement 2, Group A students had a mean score of 2.27 ($SD = 1.489$), indicating a relatively low agreement, while Group B students had a mean score of 3.42 ($SD = 1.084$), indicating a higher level of agreement. It appears that most of the students in group A do not think they would advance faster if they took the Saturday course while participants in Group B agree to a higher extent that they would advance faster if they took the weekly course. The independent samples t-test ($t = -2.120$ (21), $p = 0.046$) suggested a significant difference between Group A and Group B regarding statement 2 with Group B obtaining a higher score.

Both groups demonstrated relatively high levels of agreement for Statement 3, with Group A reporting a mean score of 4.36 ($SD = 0.674$) and Group B reporting a mean score of 4.08 ($SD = 0.793$). Therefore, both groups seem to agree on affirming that more hours of classes per week would help their English level advance faster. According to the independent samples t-test, no significant differences were found for Statement 3 ($t = 0.909$ (21), $p = 0.374$).

For Statement 4, both groups expressed mean scores above 4, indicating a high level of agreement. Group A exhibited a slightly higher mean score of 4.45 ($SD = 0.688$) compared to Group B's mean score of 4.33 ($SD = 0.888$) suggesting that participants in Groups A and B consider their English level would advance more if they took the in-person course. The

independent samples t-test conducted indicated no significant difference either ($t = 0.364$ (21), $p = 0.720$).

Statement 5 received high mean scores from both groups too, with Group A having a mean score of 4.91 (SD = 0.302) and Group B having a mean score of 4.08 (SD = 1.240). This illustrates that most participants agree on saying that if they don't practice outside the class, their proficiency level does not improve as much. There is, however, a significant difference between the groups based on the results given by the independent samples t-test ($t = 2.147$ (21), $p = 0.044$) in favour of Group A.

Overall, there are some differing perceptions between Group A and Group B regarding the impact of time distribution on English language improvement. Group A students displayed stronger agreement with statements related to studying from Monday to Thursday and the importance of practicing outside the class. On the other hand, Group B students exhibited greater agreement with statements regarding studying on Saturdays and the belief that taking the weekly course (Mondays to Thursdays) would lead to faster improvement. Having said that, both groups reached an agreement on the assumptions that more hours per week, studying in an in-person course and practicing outside of class would result in faster progress.

5.2.1 Perceptions on Time Distribution

In relation to time distribution students were asked if they thought the way the 60 hours of their class had been distributed (whether 2-hour classes Monday to Thursday or a 4-hour class on Saturday only) might have positively influenced their proficiency results in Question

1 (Figure 1). 90.9% of participants in Group A (weekly course) and 83,3% of students in Group B (Saturday course) agreed. Only one student from Group A and two students from Group B said they did not agree with the statement. Participants from Group A argued there was continuity, consistency and they could stay focused and refresh their knowledge every day, as the following extracts indicate:

“Puedo mantener el ritmo de estudio y todos los días se tiene contacto con el idioma. Lo anterior ocasiona que se refresque los conceptos y se mantenga un repaso.” Student 12 - Group A

“I can keep up with the study and there is contact with the language every day. Thus, the concepts are fresh and there is a constant review.” Student 12 - Group A

This favorable opinion was also reflected in the first Likert scale statement since the students, on average, strongly agreed ($M = 4.64$) that they were improving their English level due to studying in an intensive class. Differently, students from group B had a more neutral stance ($M = 3.75$) about studying on Saturdays every week contributing to improvement in their English level. However, they also manifested they were more focused on a single session and had the time to do other activities during the week; besides, they felt there was constant feedback, the activities developed were dynamic and well distributed, and progress was present in every session:

“Porque [las 60 horas] se hicieron de manera intensiva y además todo el tiempo se hacía retroalimentación de algunos ejercicios” Student 2 - Group B

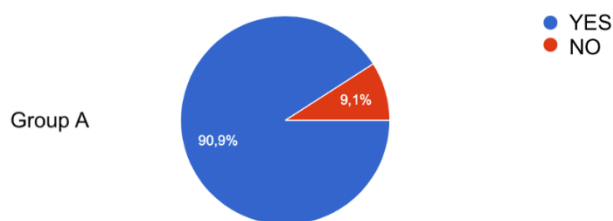
“Because the course was intensive and there was constant feedback in some exercises.” Student 2 -

Group B

“Porque hubo una progresión para cada sesión.” Student 1 - Group B

“Because there was progress in every session.” Student 1 - Group B

1. Do you think the way the 60 hours of the class were distributed (2-hour classes Monday to Thursday) might have positively influenced your proficiency results?



1. Do you think the way the 60 hours of the class were distributed (4 hours every Saturday) might have positively influenced your proficiency results?

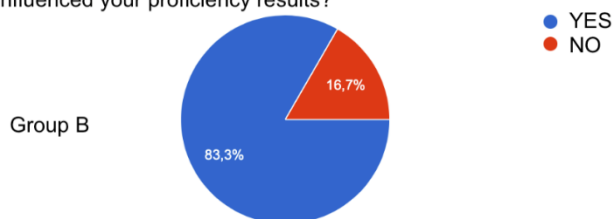


Figure 1 - Perceptions (Question 1)

As for Question 2, 4 students in Group A (36.4%) and 4 students in Group B (33.3%) thought the distribution of the hours might have negatively influenced their results (Figure 2). The reasons why this might have happened, according to the participants in the weekly course, were related to time conflict with other classes, subjects and responsibilities. On the other hand, some students in Group B argued the last hour of the class was tiring, there was no

English practice on their own during the week and they did not have the time to review the contents after class.

“Conflictos con otros estudios, otras materias, otras responsabilidades” Student 16 - Group A

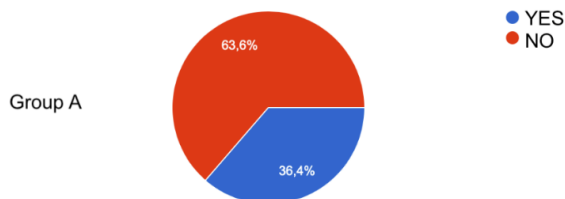
“Problems with other studies, other subjects and other responsibilities.” Student 16 - group A

“La última hora, se vuelve un poco pesada, aunque el docente intentó que fuera muy dinámico, y hubiera un descanso, se satura un poco la información.” Student 8 - Group B

“The last hour tends to be tiresome although the teacher tried to make it dynamic and there was a break, there is still lots of information.” Student 8 - Group B

There was, consequently, an overall positive perception of the distribution of the 60 hours in both groups. Negative aspects included external factors different to time distribution such as dealing with other activities at the same time. The only direct drawback linked with time was fatigue in the Saturday sessions as the students had four hours in a row.

2. Do you think the way the 60 hours of the class were distributed (2-hour classes Monday to Thursday) might have negatively influenced your proficiency results?



2. Do you think the way the 60 hours of the class were distributed (4 hours every Saturday) might have negatively influenced your proficiency results?

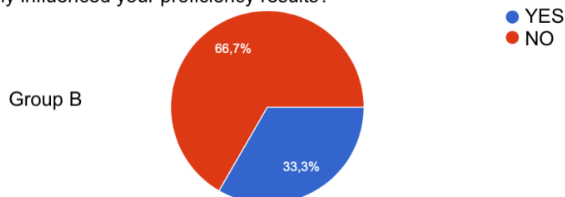


Figure 2 - Perceptions (Question 2)

When asked about having the same results in the exams if they had been in the opposite modality they were registered in, most of the participants in groups A and B disagreed (Figure 3). 81.8 % (weekly course) and 66.7% (Saturday course) of participants said the results would have been different. Some group A students affirmed it was better to have constant practice every day, so there would have been less consistency, and less continuity might have affected their proficiency. They also said they would have felt more tired in the Saturday course. Moreover in the second Likert scale statement the students highly disagreed ($M = 2.27$) that their English level would advance as much in a Saturday course compared to a weekly course. Instead, they moderately agreed ($M = 4.36$) with the third statement in the Likert scale suggesting that more hours of classes per week would help their English level advance faster.

In the same manner, some Group B students affirmed there would have been more continuity and practice in the weekly class and, in consequence, better comprehension. Likewise, more communication between the students and the teacher was mentioned and the possibility of better learning was highlighted. Other participants stated their results would not have been as good because they would not have had the time to balance their work and study life during the week. They moderately agreed ($M = 3.42$) that taking the weekly course would result in faster advancement in their English level and highly agreed ($M = 4.08$) that more hours of classes per week would help their English level advance faster.

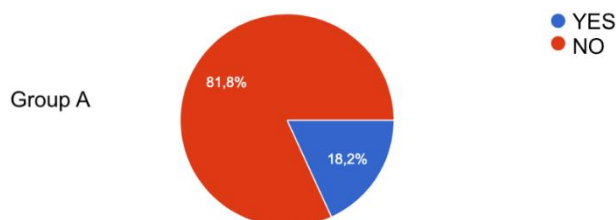
“Otros compañeros influyen y me sentiría más cansado.” Student 3 - Group A

“Other students have an impact and I’d feel more tired.” Student 3 - Group A

“Pienso que distribuir el tiempo en más días para que sea más continuo va a ser más óptimo en mi aprendizaje.” Student 13 - Group B

“I think distributing the time in more days for the course to be more constant is going to be more effective for my learning process.” Student 13 - Group B

3. Do you think your results would have been the same if you had taken the Saturday course?



3. Do you think your results would have been the same if you had taken the weekly course?

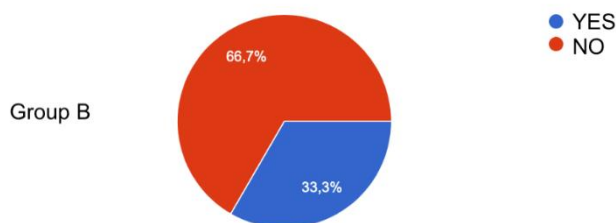


Figure 3 - Perceptions (Question 3)

The questionnaire also targeted what advantages and disadvantages the students perceived in their courses. Group A participants emphasised continuity, constant immersion, the number of hours, and intensity as positive aspects of their weekly course. On the other hand, tiredness and speed were described as the drawbacks of the English class.

“Estar inmerso casi todos los días en el aprendizaje y tener la oportunidad de tener input y output casi todos los días es una gran ventaja.” Student 6 - Group A

“Being immersed in learning every day and having input and output chances almost every day is a huge advantage.” Student 6 - Group A

“Puede ser pesado en algunos momentos del semestre” Student 3 - Group A

“It can be tiresome in some moments of the term.” Student 3 - Group A

“Se siente muy rápido a veces.” Student 16 - Group A

“It sometimes felt too fast.” Student 16 - Group A

The benefits of taking the Saturday course for participants in Group B were having the time to do other activities during the week and being able to focus on a single session. They also highlighted the ease they have with their schedules since they do not think of other things during the class. The main disadvantages mentioned are lack of practice during the week, lack of interaction between students and tendency to forget things.

“Es una buena intensidad horaria para la clase, y permite abarcar varios contenidos y hacer, por otro lado, es ideal para los estudiantes que por sus compromisos laborales sólo pueden asistir los fines de semana.” Student 3 - Group B

“On the one hand, the number of hours per class is good and it allows us to study the contents. On the other, it is perfect for students who have other work commitments and can only attend the course during the weekend.” Student 3 - Group B

“que si durante la semana, no repasamos, algunas cosas se olvidan.” Student 12 - Group B

“If we don’t practice during the week, we might forget some things.” Student 12 - Group B

5.2.2 Perceptions on Online vs. Face-to-face Learning

Considering in-person classes, a little more than half of the students in Group A (54.5%) and a high number of students in Group B (66.7%) thought their results would not have been the same if they had taken the course in a classroom. Most of the reasons given to support this belief included more interaction between the teacher and the students and the possibility of having direct contact with another person in the same space. The participants who believed their results would have been the same (45.5% Group A and 33.3% Group B) expressed both methods were as effective and they did not see any differences. Moreover the tools provided in the online sessions matched the ones provided in the in-person sessions.

“Aunque los profesores que he tenido en mis cursos virtuales han sido muy buenos, me gustan más las clases presenciales, porque hay más oportunidad de interactuar con los compañeros y el profesor.” Student 1 - Group A

“Although the teachers I’ve had in my online courses have been really good, I like in-person classes better because there are more chances to interact with classmates and the teacher.”

Student 1 - Group A

“Me es indiferente la modalidad del curso mientras el contenido del curso se abarque por completo, y se tenga la disposición de hacer las clases más amenas.” Student 3 - Group B

“I don’t mind the modality of the course providing that all the contents of the course are taught and there is a desire to make classes appealing.” Student 3 - Group B

Having said that, participants of both groups strongly agreed with the fourth statement in the Likert Scale (Group A M = 4.55, Group B M = 4.33) that expressed that taking an in-person course would result in greater advancement in their English level compared to an online course.

4. Do you think your results would have been the same if you had taken the course in the in-person modality?

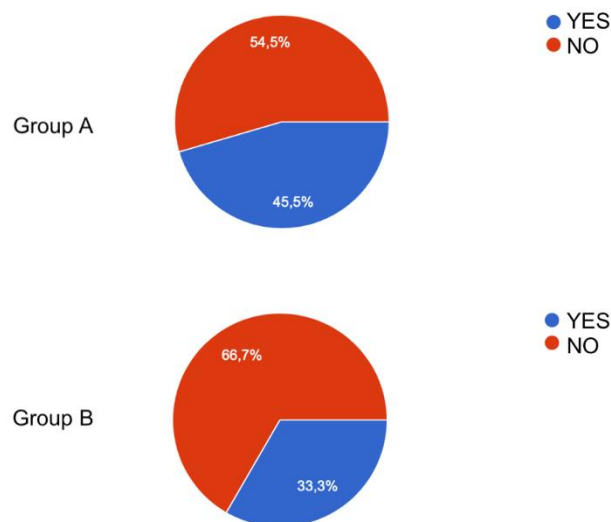


Figure 4 - Perceptions (Question 4)

5.2.3 Perceptions on Language Practice Outside Class

Students were also asked whether they practiced English outside the class or not (Figure 5). 72.7% of participants in Group A and 83.3% of participants in Group B answered they did. Most of the activities mentioned were watching movies, series, and YouTube videos. They also said they practiced by watching reels on Instagram, Tik Tok videos and videos in other social media. Some other participants asserted that they used the language by doing their homework and reviewing for the English classes. With respect to the time dedicated to it (Figure 6), 25% of students in Group A said between 4 to 6 hours, 37.5% between 7 to 9 hours and 37.5% between 1 to 3 hours. Conversely, the majority of students in Group B (90.9%) said they had only practiced English outside the class between 1 to 3 hours; only one student reported they had practiced between 4 to 6 hours.

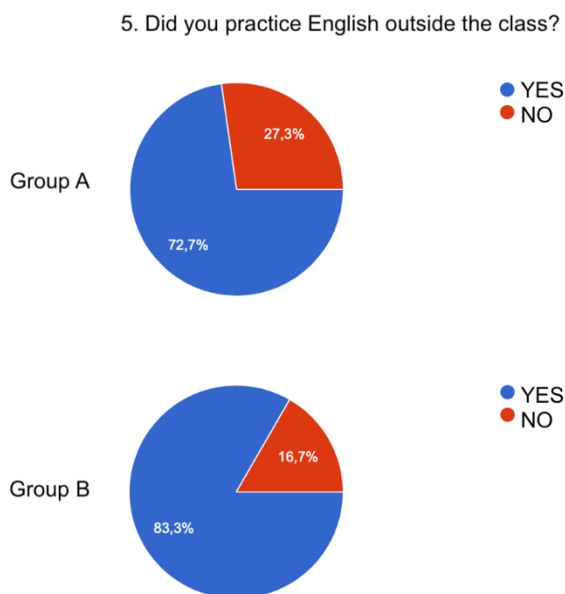


Figure 5 - Perceptions (Question 5)

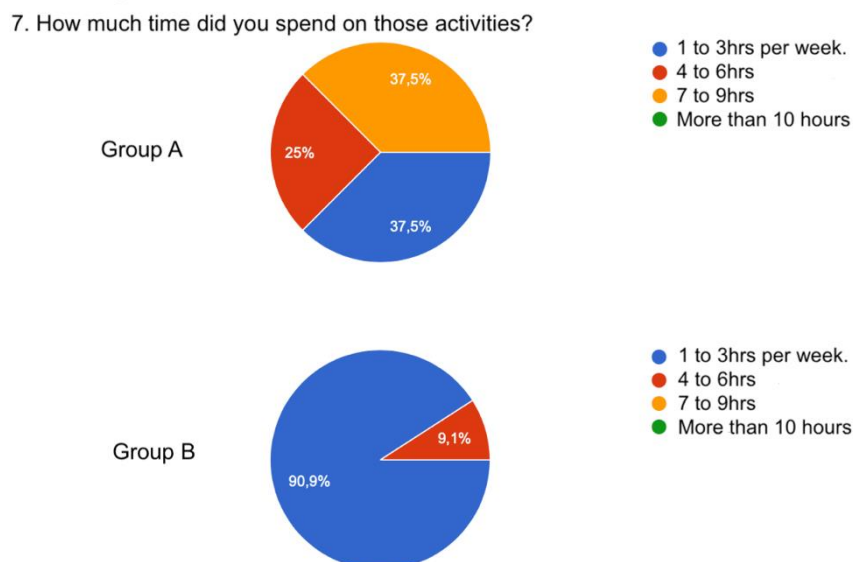


Figure 6 - Perceptions (Question 7)

In summary, it appears that the students in Group A generally agreed that studying in an intensive course, practicing outside the class, and taking in-person courses can contribute to their English language improvement. However, there is a slightly lower agreement regarding the impact of Saturday courses and the effect of increasing class hours per week. For students in Group B, it seems that the students generally believe that more hours of classes and taking in-person courses can contribute to their English language improvement. However, they have a relatively neutral or slightly disagreeing stance regarding taking classes only once a week (i.e on Saturdays), the impact of not practicing outside the class, and the effectiveness of the weekly course.

5.2.4 Perceptions on Language Skills Improvement

Regarding their improvement in each of their linguistic abilities (Figure 7), the majority of the participants in Group A considered they had made progress in writing (81.8%) and speaking (72.7%). Half of the students (54.5%), however, thought they had not advanced in their reading nor in their listening skills. Likewise, when they were asked to rate their abilities in terms of improvement (Figure 8), most of the people in Group A expressed their speaking had progressed the most (72.7%), followed by their writing (45.4%). Although reading was not considered to have the most improvement, it was ranked as the second most improved by 45.4% of the participants. Listening had diverse rankings by all the students who placed it in first (27.2%), second (27.2%), third (27.2%) and fourth (18.1%) place of progress. There was not an agreement in the skill the participants in Group A considered had improved the least (reading writing and listening 18.8% each)

For participants in Group B, their reading (83.3%), writing (83.3%), listening (75%) and speaking (58%) skills improved during the course (Figure 7). However, an important number of students (42%) said their speaking skill had not made any progress. Regarding their rankings from most to least advanced (Figure 8), there was not a clear agreement among the participants about the skill they considered had progressed the best (reading 33.3%, listening 16.6%, writing 8.3% and speaking 25%). Yet, there was some agreement in classifying the second most improved ability among listening (50%), reading (50%), and speaking (41.6%). Similar to Group A, participants in Group B did not reach an agreement in considering the skill that had improved the least (writing 33.3%, listening 25%, and reading and speaking 8.3% each)

8. Do you think your linguistic abilities have improved during the course?

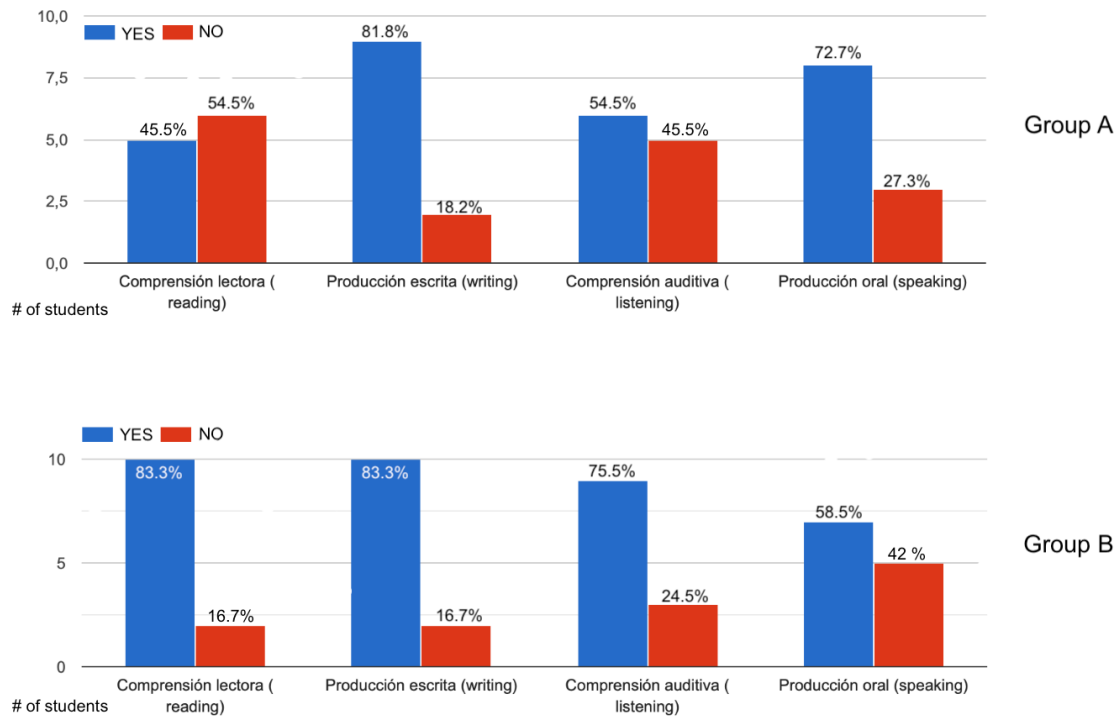


Figure 7 - Perceptions (Question 8)

9. Which skills do you think you have improved the most? Please order them from 1 to 4, 1 being the one that has improved the most and 4 the one that has improved the least.

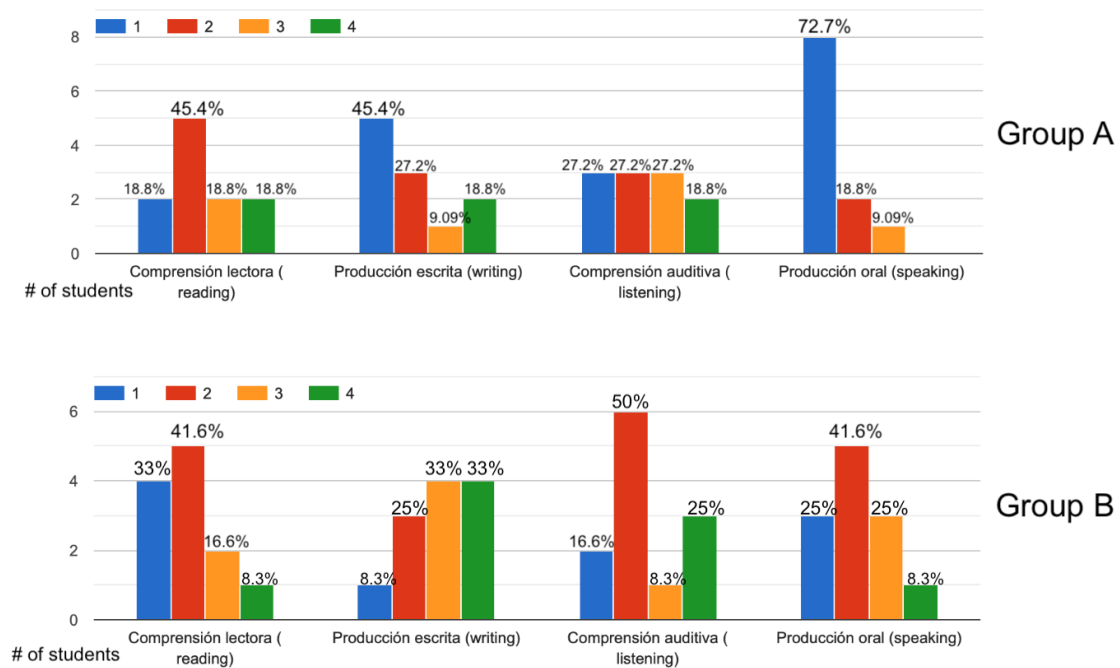


Figure 8 - Perceptions (Question 9)

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The present study sought to examine the effects of time distribution on the development of EFL students' language skills in online environments and the students' perceptions of their linguistic development concerning this matter. The study consisted of two groups of participants who received the same number of hours of instruction: Group A received intensive instruction for two months, and Group B received extensive instruction for four months. The participants were assessed using the same external test at the beginning and end of the instructional period to measure the effects on their reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. Also, at the end of the instruction period, the participants' perceptions were gathered by means of a questionnaire.

6.1 The Effects of Time Distribution on Online EFL learning

Before instruction, both groups had similar proficiency levels, as indicated by the results of the preliminary tests. Although Group B tended to have slightly higher mean scores in reading, listening, and writing, none of the differences reached statistical significance. This suggests that the participants' proficiency levels were comparable before instruction, allowing for a valid comparison between the two groups.

After the 60-hour instruction period, the results showed no significant differences between Group A and Group B in any of the assessed skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) or the total scores. The mean differences between the groups were not statistically significant, indicating that any observed variations could be due to chance. Therefore, based

on these findings, it can be concluded that time distribution (intensive vs. extensive instruction) did not have a significant impact on the development of language skills in the online environment and it is not possible to affirm that the spacing effect in Rohrer's (2015) or Rogers' (2017) terms has a manifest superiority of *distributed* over *massed* learning when it comes to online environments. Similarly, based on the results, it is not feasible to say either that intensive or concentrated teaching was more effective in virtual scenarios for the participants' language development.

It is also important to note at this point that the focus of this study was on general language skills. The study did not specifically analyze the impact of time distribution on specific grammar structures or vocabulary. Different results might have emerged if these specific aspects had been examined. It is possible that intensive and extensive instruction could have yielded other outcomes in terms of grammar or vocabulary acquisition, and they could have also contributed to a broader range of vocabulary or more extensive language use. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of time distribution on different aspects of language learning, future studies could consider specifically investigating the influence on grammar structures, vocabulary acquisition, or other linguistic sub-skills. Such research would provide valuable insights into the relationship between time distribution and specific areas of language development in virtual learning contexts.

Having said that, when examining the results after instruction (Test 2), the paired-samples t-tests showed no significant differences in improvement between the groups. This implies that the instructional period did not significantly affect the progress in the participants' language skills, regardless of the time distribution; similarly to Bird's

investigation (2010), which showed that both intensive and extensive instruction led to significant improvements in performance without significant differences between the two spacing conditions. It seems, therefore, that the effects of online teaching resemble those from in-person instruction as found by Kim & Webb (2022) who stated that in immediate posttests, shorter spacing intervals were as effective as longer spacing intervals. However, it is important to note that the duration of the instructional period in the present study was relatively short (60 hours), which might have limited the potential for significant differences. This may be referred to as a limitation in this exploratory research. Then, it would be necessary to analyze longer instructional periods or longer sequential courses with the same participants comparing intensive and extensive exposure in online teaching contexts. Likewise, another limitation lies in the fact that the study did not have a delayed posttest. As it has been noted by some authors like Carpenter (2017), it is likely that language proficiency benefits following regular courses vs. intensive courses might not come out on immediate tests. In the present exploratory study, it was not possible to carry out delayed posttests because Group A started their next level forthwith and then participants would have had more hours of instruction making the results of a possible delayed posttest biased.

There are, however, notable findings in the results found within each group's students' improvements between Test 1 and Test 2. On the one hand, participants in Group A, for instance, had a significant improvement in their speaking skill after instruction. This might support the idea presented by Serrano and Muñoz (2007) about concentrating more time on learning English to have a positive effect on L2 learning, but this time with a special emphasis on the speaking ability in online environments. Moreover, this improvement might serve as evidence too to show that frequent linguistic exposure is essential to second language

acquisition in the automatization of language skills (Ellis, 2002; DeKeyser, 2007; Segalowitz, 2010; Segalowitz & Hulstijn, 2005) particularly the speaking skill in online scenarios. Yet, the lack of improvement in other skills could suggest the need for further research into the instructional approach. On the other hand, participants in Group B demonstrated significant improvements in speaking and total scores after receiving instruction, but there were no significant differences in reading, listening, or writing skills specifically. Interestingly, the same ability improved, suggesting that gains in speaking might be maintained over a longer and extended period of time in virtual environments. Consequently, pre intermediate participants might benefit in the same manner from intensive and extensive exposure in terms of speaking skills.

Regarding the meaningful enhancement in total scores for Group B, the results could suggest that students under online instruction with more space-out sessions are more likely to consolidate their language skills as they had more time and space between learning sessions and assessment, favoring the experiments in cognitive psychology literature. Now then, a crucial factor in the distribution of time for Group B relies on the fact that their sessions were 4 hours long, i.e. although the 60 hours of the course were distributed over a weekly interval, the sessions themselves were massed or intensive in comparison to the two-hour sessions in Group A. That would also indicate that spaced lapses might only be beneficial if the instructional sessions are intensive and concentrated (Serrano, 2012). It would be necessary, then, to analyze in future research classes with the same length varying only the distribution of intervals; for instance, two-hour classes with an extensive and an intensive approach.

Finally and regarding the results of gains in performance for both groups, the t-tests did not reveal any significant differences between the gains in Group A and Group B although Group B's improvements in skills and overall scores were slightly higher than those in Group A. The lack of significant differences suggest that the distribution of time might have not affected or influenced the participants' development of their language skills. Similar to Collins and White's study (2011), the findings in the present research do not fundamentally mean that concentrating all intensive English hours in a period of time is more beneficial than distributing them in "mini-intensives" and both program types are effective in improving English learning.

Having said that, the lack of significant differences and improvement in the participants' linguistic skills could be attributed to several factors. First, the instructional approach, materials, and methodologies used in the study might have been as effective in promoting substantial skill development within the short time frame of the study with a special benefit on speaking for both groups. Second, the online environment itself might have presented challenges for language learning in the other language abilities (reading, writing, listening). Online instruction is sometimes seen as lacking elements face-to-face instruction provides, which could impact language acquisition. It would be important then, to analyze in future studies the role of elements like interaction in online environments. Additionally, individual differences among the participants, such as prior language learning experience, motivation, age and learning styles could have also influenced their progress (Rogers, 2021).

Furthermore, the relatively small sample size and potential limitations in the assessment tools used could have affected the statistical power and sensitivity of the study.

A larger sample size and more comprehensive assessment measures might provide more reliable results and a better understanding of the effects of time distribution on linguistic skill development.

6.2 Perceptions on Time Distribution and Online Instruction

Regarding the participants' perceptions on time distribution, the majority of the students in both Group A (weekly course) and Group B (Saturday course) agreed that the way the 60 hours of their class had been distributed influenced their proficiency results positively. Group A students appreciated the continuity and consistency of daily classes, allowing them to stay focused and refresh their knowledge. Group B students had a more neutral stance, emphasizing the ability to focus on a single session and engage in other activities during the week. This might suggest that the hours in intensive and extensive courses offered by EFL instruction centers are highly accepted and praised by students; something positive for institutions which want to know if more or fewer hours per session are necessary. As a result, it becomes possible to make informed decisions regarding improved instructional practices and approaches, thereby enriching curriculum development (Dörnyei, 2014).

When asked if their results would have been the same if they had been in the opposite course modality, most participants disagreed. Group A students mentioned the benefits of constant practice every day and expressed concerns about consistency and fatigue in the Saturday course. Group B students highlighted the potential for more continuity and practice in the weekly class, better comprehension, and increased communication with the teacher. They also mentioned the challenge of balancing work and study life during the week.

Therefore, students' perception in both groups perpetuate the idea that intensive instruction is more beneficial and has more assets.

In terms of advantages and disadvantages of their classes, Group A participants appreciated the continuity, constant immersion, and the intensity of their weekly course. However, they also mentioned tiredness and speed as drawbacks. Group B participants valued the flexibility to engage in other activities during the week and the ability to focus during the single session. Disadvantages included the lack of practice during the week, reduced interaction among students, and a tendency to forget things. Opportunities for improvement arise here since instruction approaches might consider the role of fatigue and speed to adapt and modify their teaching lessons in extensive and intensive environments, and as Church et. al (2001) have asserted, the way students perceive their classroom environment holds substantial influence over the achievement goals they embrace. Future research may also analyze how those external factors play a role in the development of linguistic skills; and also, it would be interesting to analyze how interaction and memory coexist in L2 online scenarios.

When comparing online classes to in-person classes, most participants in both groups believed that their results would not have been the same if they had taken the course in a classroom. Notably, participants in both groups strongly agreed that taking an in-person course would result in greater advancement in their English level compared to an online course supporting results from previous studies (Albiansyah et. al, 2021). They mentioned increased interaction with the teacher and the possibility of direct contact with others as reasons supporting their belief. However, a portion of participants believed that both methods

were equally effective, mentioning that the tools provided in the online sessions matched those provided in the in-person sessions, similar to past findings (Nhung and Yen's, 2022) that have highlighted that students exhibit a sense of enjoyment during their learning experiences within online environments. Consequently, these findings open up the door to conduct future studies comparing online and in-person L2 instruction. Ensuring that instructional tools and teaching methods used in both online and face-to-face instruction are up-to-date and in line with student needs is essential (Mather and Sarkans, 2018). This commitment plays a vital role in promoting student success and satisfaction.

In terms of practice outside the class, a significant percentage of participants in both groups reported practicing English. Activities mentioned included watching movies, series, YouTube videos, and engaging with content on social media platforms. Some participants also mentioned doing homework and reviewing for English classes as ways of practicing the language. Although the students in the weekly course said they had spent more time practicing outside the class than those in the Saturday course the results of the posttest were almost alike. This finding generates suspicions and mistrust that demands further analysis because the type of outside practices and the frequency and time distribution of those activities come into play in the linguistic development of L2 students.

Concerning the perceived improvement in specific skills, both groups interestingly coincided in their advance in the speaking skill considering that was the skill that significantly improved the most within groups. Group A participants reported progress in writing and speaking, while half of them believed their reading and listening skills had not advanced. Group B participants indicated improvements in all four skills, with reading and

writing showing the highest advancement. There was a lack of consensus among participants regarding the skills that had improved the least. What seems curious here is that the writing skill was also praised in both groups showing that the test results are not always consistent with the students' opinions and perceptions of their own linguistic development.

Overall, participants in Group A believed that studying in an intensive course, practicing outside the class, and taking in-person courses could contribute to their English language improvement. Group B participants generally believed that more hours of classes and taking in-person courses could facilitate their English language improvement. However, there were mixed opinions regarding the impact of Saturday courses and the effect of increasing class hours per week.

6.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, which compared the effects of intensive and extensive instruction on EFL students' linguistic skills in online environments, no significant differences or improvement were observed between the two groups. These results suggest that factors other than time distribution, such as instructional approaches and the virtual learning context, might play a more significant role in determining the development of language skills. Further research with larger sample sizes, longer instructional periods and complementary assessment procedures is warranted to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between time distribution and language skill development in online environments.

This investigation also revealed that participants had varying perceptions of their linguistic development concerning time distribution. Both intensive and extensive course modalities had, according to the participants, positive and negative aspects. They also believed that their results would have been different if they had been in the opposite modality. Practising outside class was acknowledged as usual by most participants, and they recognized the benefits of in-person classes in terms of interaction and direct contact. The findings highlight the importance of considering students' perceptions and preferences in designing language courses and determining the optimal time distribution for effective language learning. Individual student perspectives may still vary, and further qualitative analysis or discussion would provide deeper insights into their experiences and beliefs.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A – Consent form and Biometric Questionnaire

Estimad@ estudiante:

Gracias por tomarse el tiempo de leer este documento. Usted ha sido invitad@ a participar en una investigación sobre los efectos de la enseñanza del inglés en la modalidad online en las habilidades lingüísticas de lectura, escritura, habla y escucha. Este estudio es realizado por el docente Sebastian Fiquitiva y autorizado por la coordinación de los cursos de extensión de inglés de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia. La investigación hace parte de la maestría Advanced English Studies que el profesor está cursando en la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Este es un formulario de consentimiento cuyo objetivo es entregar la información necesaria para que usted decida si desea participar o no en dicha investigación. Su participación es voluntaria y consistirá en la presentación de dos simulacros de la prueba internacional *B1 Preliminary* que evalúa el Nivel B1 de inglés dentro del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia. Al finalizar el curso también habrá un pequeño cuestionario para que comparta su opinión frente al desarrollo del mismo.

Aclaraciones frente a la prueba y la investigación:

1. El primer simulacro se hará en la primera semana del curso y la segunda prueba al finalizar el nivel. El tiempo dedicado al desarrollo de las pruebas no está contemplado dentro de las 60 horas del curso, de manera que no hacen parte del nivel 3A al cual usted está inscrit@. Si no desea participar, no habrá ningún inconveniente en el desarrollo de contenidos del nivel.
2. Las notas y calificaciones de dichos exámenes serán compartidos con ustedes al final del curso y no tendrán ningún tipo de incidencia en las evaluaciones que se hagan en el nivel 3A. Dichos resultados les permitirán, por el contrario, conocer qué tan preparad@s o no están para la presentación de pruebas internacionales estandarizadas y en qué posible nivel, de acuerdo con el Marco Común Europeo, estarían ubicad@s.
3. Se garantiza la confidencialidad y protección total de los datos personales e información suministrada por los y las participantes de la investigación. Ni su nombre, ni su documento de identidad, ni ningún tipo de información que pueda identificarl@ aparecerá en los registros del estudio, ya que se usarán códigos. El almacenamiento de los códigos estará a cargo única y exclusivamente del profesor Sebastian Fiquitiva.
4. El participar en este estudio no tiene costos y no recibirá ningún pago por hacer parte de él. Los resultados serán publicados en el Trabajo Final de Máster, que es un documento de índole académico, preservando la exactitud de los resultados y haciendo referencia a datos globales y no a los participantes o a la Universidad Nacional de Colombia en particular.
5. Si en algún momento tiene dudas o preguntas frente al presente estudio, puede contactar al docente y él gentilmente hará las aclaraciones respectivas.

Si usted desea participar en esta investigación, por favor complete la siguiente información. Caso contrario no debe suministrar ningún dato. Muchas gracias.

1. Nombre Completo
2. Edad
3. Género
Masculino
Femenino
Otro: _____
4. ¿Cuál es su lengua materna?
5. ¿Ha vivido alguna vez en un país angloparlante?
6. ¿Es la primera vez que hace un curso de manera virtual?
7. Si su respuesta es "no" ¿cuánto tiempo lleva estudiando inglés bajo esta modalidad? (Si su respuesta fue "sí", puede dejar este espacio en blanco)
8. ¿Ha estudiado inglés de manera presencial antes?
9. Si su respuesta es sí ¿cuánto tiempo estudió inglés bajo esa modalidad? (Si su respuesta fue no, puede dejar este espacio en blanco)
10. ¿Por qué razón o razones decidió tomar el curso en la modalidad intensiva de lunes a jueves?
11. ¿Por qué razón o razones decidió tomar el curso en la modalidad online?

Muchas gracias por su colaboración. Sus aportes serán muy valiosos para la investigación.

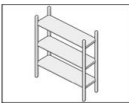


APPENDIX B – B1 Preliminary (Test 1)

Part 1

Questions 1 – 7



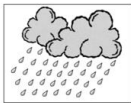
For each question, choose the correct answer.

1 What did the girl buy on her shopping trip?




A B C

2 Why did the plane leave late?

A B C

3 What activity does the woman want to book for the weekend?

A B C


4 Which cake will the girl order?





A B C

5 How much must customers spend to get a free gift?


A B C

6 What did the family do on Sunday?





A B C

7 Which programme is on first?





A B C

Part 2

Questions 8 – 13

For each question, choose the correct answer.

- 8 You will hear two friends talking about a new clothes shop. What does the girl say about it?
- A The staff are helpful.
 - B It only has the latest fashions.
 - C Prices are reduced at the moment.
- 9 You will hear two friends talking about a pop band's website. They think the site would be better if
- A its information was up to date.
 - B it was easier to buy concert tickets.
 - C the band members answered messages.
- 10 You will hear a woman telling a friend about an art competition she's won. How does she feel about it?
- A upset that the prize isn't valuable
 - B excited that the judges liked her picture
 - C disappointed that she can't use the prize
- 11 You will hear two friends talking about the girl's flatmate. The girl thinks that her flatmate
- A is too untidy.
 - B talks too much.
 - C plays music too loud.

4

- 12 You will hear two friends talking about a football match. They agree that their team lost because
- A the players weren't confident enough.
 - B they were missing some key players.
 - C the players didn't do the right training.
- 13 You will hear two friends talking about a tennis match they played. The boy wants the girl to
- A help him to get fitter.
 - B practise with him more often.
 - C enter more competitions with him.

5

Turn over ►

Part 3

Questions 14 – 19

For each question, write the correct answer in the gap. Write **one** or **two words** or a **number** or a **date** or a **time**.

You will hear a radio presenter called Anita talking about her holiday in Cuba.

ANITA'S HOLIDAY IN CUBA:

In the National Gardens, the (14) was the thing that attracted most people.

On the swimming trip, electronic armbands kept the (15) away.

On the day in the countryside, Anita almost fell off a (16)

In the capital city, Anita saw a (17) in a theatre.

Anita enjoyed visiting a farm where (18) is produced.

Anita bought some (19) as gifts.

6

Part 4

Questions 20 – 25

For each question, choose the correct answer.

You will hear an interview with a woman called Vicky Prince, a champion swimmer who now works as a swimming coach.

- 20 Vicky first went in for competitions because
- A she had joined a swimming club.
 - B her parents were keen on swimming.
 - C her swimming teacher encouraged her.
- 21 As a teenager, Vicky's training involved
- A exercising on land as well as in the water.
 - B going without meals during the day.
 - C travelling to a pool once a day.
- 22 What did Vicky find hard about her training programme?
- A She couldn't go on school trips.
 - B She lost some of her friends.
 - C She missed lots of parties.
- 23 What helped Vicky to do well in the national finals?
- A She was not expected to win.
 - B She trained harder than usual.
 - C She wanted to take a cup home.
- 24 As a swimming coach, Vicky thinks she's best at teaching people
- A to deal with failure.
 - B to improve their technique.
 - C to get swimming qualifications.
- 25 Why has Vicky started doing long-distance swimming?
- A She needed to get fit again.
 - B She thought it would be fun.
 - C She wanted to do some travelling.

7

Part 1

Questions 1 – 5

For each question, choose the correct answer.

1



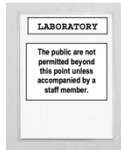
- A The competition is open to people over a certain age.
- B There is a maximum age limit for this competition.
- C Only eighteen-year-olds are allowed to enter this competition.

2



- Adam is telling Rachel to
- A post something for him.
- B find out how to do something.
- C give him something he needs.

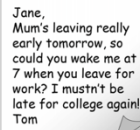
3



- A Members of staff must be accompanied if they wish to pass this point.
- B Members of the public can't go through unless they are visiting someone working here.
- C Members of the public may go further if a company employee goes with them.

2

4



- A Tom wants to persuade Jane to take him to college tomorrow morning.
- B Tom would like Jane to do him a favour tomorrow morning.
- C Tom is reminding Jane they have to get up early tomorrow morning.

5



- A The Careers Centre will give you a copy of any advertisement on this board.
- B This board is used to advertise the work done by the Careers Centre.
- C If you ask the Careers Centre, you can advertise for free on this board.

3

Turn over ►

Part 2

Questions 6 – 10

For each question, choose the correct answer.

The people below all want to visit a city market. On the opposite page there are descriptions of eight markets. Decide which market would be the most suitable for the people below.

6



Jenny wants to buy locally-produced food traditional to the area. She needs somewhere convenient to eat, and as she's sightseeing in the city, the market shouldn't be far from local attractions.

7



Matt wants a market where he can get something to wear at reasonable prices, and something hot to eat. He's also keen on music, and likes finding rare recordings by different bands.

8



Sammie wants to visit a market after spending the day in the city. He would like to photograph a historic place, and buy a painting by someone unknown.

9



Alexia is looking for a really special necklace for her grandmother's birthday. She'd like to spend the whole day at the market, and wants to avoid the cold by staying inside.

10



Ella is looking for objects from other countries for her friends. She'd like to choose a second-hand book to read on the journey home, and wants a snack at the market, too.

4

City Markets

A Beckfield Market

This market's world-famous for second-hand camera equipment and books on photography. As well as an amazing range of cameras, we have old pictures of local places of interest for you to buy, and of course the stall owners are happy to give you advice for free! Don't miss our hot soup stall in cold weather.

C Camberwall Market

There's lots to see in this interesting indoor market, so it's open from morning until late, in a fantastic modern setting. Find everything from rare gold and silver jewellery to designer clothes – although the prices aren't cheap, the quality's excellent. After shopping, enjoy a meal in a nearby restaurant.

E Oldford Lane

Situated in the historic city centre, you'll find a wide range of jewellery and clothes. Arrive early to avoid disappointment – bargains are found in the morning, and the stalls pack up after lunch. If the weather's good, enjoy watching the world go by, although it gets very busy in the tourist season.

G Teddingley Market

Situated under historic city walls, in this busy market you'll find a huge selection of great-value new and second-hand clothes. There are also stalls offering unusual albums by international singers, often hard to find in shops. Our world-food area allows you to taste food from abroad, cooked in front of you by international chefs.

B Rosewell Hill

Our market's in an amazing building that's hundreds of years old. Visitors find our late-night opening hours convenient, and there are always performers entertaining the crowds. We've recently opened more stalls specializing in pictures both from well-known artists and also those beginning their careers.

D Cobbledown Road

A small market that's open in all weathers. Come and find something really fantastic – treat yourself or someone special! We have a wide selection of jewellery and musical instruments, produced locally by highly-skilled people, and home-made cakes to enjoy.

F Parford Market

Close to museums and art galleries, this is the place to buy something for lunch, as well as fresh fruit and special breads. Try the region's famous cheese – the producers are there with advice on different types. Eat on the seats situated around the market, watching the colourful scene and enjoying music from local bands.

H Frome Place

Stalls open during normal daytime shopping hours so, depending on the weather, there's plenty to entertain you the whole day. Try our sandwich bar if you're hungry, and look for an old copy of something by a favourite author. We also have gifts from all over the world.

5

Turn over ►

Part 3

Questions 11 – 15

For each question, choose the correct answer.

Artist Peter Fuller talks about his hobby

There's a popular idea that artists are not supposed to be into sport, but mountain biking is a huge part of my life. It gets me out of my studio, and into the countryside. But more importantly, racing along as fast as you can leaves you no time to worry about anything that's going on in your life. You're too busy concentrating on not crashing. The only things you pay attention to are the pain in your legs and the rocks on the path in front of you.

I'm in my sixties now, but I started cycling when I was a kid. In the summer my friends and I would ride our bikes into the woods and see who was brave enough to go down steep hills, or do big jumps. The bikes we had then weren't built for that, and often broke, so I used to draw pictures of bikes with big thick tyres that would be strong enough for what we were doing. They looked just like modern mountain bikes. However, it wasn't until many years later that someone actually invented one. By the 1980s, they were everywhere.

At that time I was into skateboarding. I did that for a decade until falling off on to hard surfaces started to hurt too much. Mountain biking seemed a fairly safe way to keep fit, so I took that up instead. I made a lot of friends, and got involved in racing, which gave me a reason to train hard. I wanted to find out just how fit and fast I could get, which turned out to be fairly quick. I even won a couple of local races.

In the end I stopped racing, mainly because I knew what it could mean to my career if I had a bad crash. But I still like to do a three-hour mountain bike ride every week. And if I'm out cycling in the hills and see a rider ahead, I have to beat them to the top. As I go past I imagine how surprised they would be if they knew how old I am.

6

11 Peter enjoys mountain biking because

- A it gives him the opportunity to enjoy the views.
- B he can use the time to plan his work.
- C he is able to stop thinking about his problems.
- D it helps him to concentrate better.

12 What does Peter say about cycling during his childhood?

- A He is sorry he didn't take more care of his bike.
- B His friends always had better quality bikes than he did.
- C His bike wasn't suitable for the activities he was doing.
- D He was more interested in designing bikes than riding them.

13 Peter says he returned to cycling after several years

- A because he had become unfit.
- B so that he could enter races.
- C in order to meet new people.
- D to replace an activity he had given up.

14 How does Peter feel about cycling now?

- A He is proud that he is still so fast.
- B He is keen to do less now that he is older.
- C He regrets the fact that he can no longer compete.
- D He wishes more people were involved in the sport.

15 What would be a good introduction to this article?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>A</p> <p>For Peter Fuller, nothing matters more than mountain biking, not even his career. Here, in his own words, he tells us why.</p> | <p>B</p> <p>Artist Peter Fuller takes mountain biking pretty seriously. Here he describes how it all began and what he gets out of it.</p> |
| <p>C</p> <p>In this article, Peter Fuller explains how he became an artist only as a result of his interest in mountain biking.</p> | <p>D</p> <p>After discovering mountain biking late in life, Peter Fuller gave up art for a while to concentrate on getting as good as possible.</p> |

7

Turn over ►

Part 4

Questions 16 – 20

Five sentences have been removed from the text below.
For each question, choose the correct answer.
There are three extra sentences which you do not need to use.

A new life

I used to work as a college lecturer in the north of England, running photography courses. It wasn't a bad job and I really liked my students, but I began to feel tired of doing the same thing every day.

16

I'd always loved travelling, so one weekend I typed 'international volunteering' into an internet search engine. At the top of the results page was the opportunity to go and stay on an island in the Indian Ocean, thousands of miles away, and help to protect the beaches and the sea life. 17 I had some diving experience, and the more I talked about it, the more I wanted to do it. So I contacted the organisation. One week later they offered to send me to the island and I accepted. 18 After all, the volunteer job was only for two months during the summer holidays. I thought after I'd finished, I'd come home.

As soon as I got to the island, I was sure I'd done the right thing. My first dive was incredible. 19 I felt so lucky to be able to experience that every day.

In fact I loved it so much that I never came home! I've now been on the island for ten years and I have a permanent job. I'm working as a marine educator, teaching volunteers about the sea life and taking them snorkelling and diving. My desk is a picnic table 10 metres from the best beach on the island. Of course not everything about my new life is perfect. 20 However, I can't imagine going back to my old life.

8

- | | |
|---|--|
| A | That's why I knew it was a terrible plan. |
| B | I had trained in icy water in the UK so the crystal clear warm water felt amazing. |
| C | They always ask lots of questions. |
| D | I work far harder than I used to. |
| E | I began joking to friends about sending in an application. |
| F | Afterwards, some people were surprised by my decision but I wasn't too worried. |
| G | I decided I needed a break. |
| H | I needed to explain that first. |

9

Turn over ►

Part 5

Questions 21 – 26

For each question, choose the correct answer.

The Coconut Tree

The coconut tree is thought to be one of the most valuable trees in the world. It is mostly found by the sea where there is a hot and wet (21) The coconuts often fall into the sea and float on the water until they (22) another beach, where more trees then begin to grow.

Holiday makers often see the coconut tree as no more than an attractive sun umbrella that provides (23) However, this amazing tree has hundreds of (24) and more are still being discovered.

People have made houses, boats and baskets from the coconut tree's wood and leaves for centuries. Even today, if you take a (25) in your cupboards, you will find coconut oil in products as (26) as medicine and desserts.

- 21 A temperature B condition C climate D weather
22 A reach B go C travel D arrive
23 A cloud B shade C dark D cold
24 A uses B jobs C roles D things
25 A scene B sight C look D view
26 A opposite B separate C strange D different

10

Part 1

You must answer this question.

Write your answer in about 100 words on the answer sheet.

Question 1

Read this email from your English-speaking friend Sandy and the notes you have made.

EMAIL

From: Sandy
Subject: Your visit!

Hi,

I'm so excited that you're coming to stay with me for a week!

On your first evening here, there's a rock concert in our town. Would you like to go to the concert or would you prefer us to relax at home?

Also, shall we go climbing in the mountains while you're here?

Let me know if you have any questions.

See you soon

Sandy

Me too!

Say which I prefer

No, because ...

Ask Sandy ...

Write your email to Sandy using all the notes.

2

Part 6

Questions 27 – 32

For each question, write the correct answer.

Write one word for each gap.

The Natural History Museum

This is one of my favourite places to visit. I've learned a huge amount about animals and plants (27) time I've visited. I've even seen bits of rock from the moon!

The building's really beautiful and it's easy to find your way around. There are hundreds of interesting things on display, but (28) you like dinosaurs the best time (29) see them is during term-time. I've been twice in the school holidays and the queue was (30) long that I wasn't able to visit that part (31) the museum.

You'll probably want something to eat while you're there. You can take (32) own picnic and eat in the museum garden, or try one of the two museum cafés.

11

Part 2

Choose one of these questions.

Write your answer in about 100 words on the answer sheet.

Question 2

You see this notice on an English-language website.

Articles wanted!

FILMS

What kind of films do you enjoy?

Do you prefer watching them at the cinema or at home? Why?

Write an article answering these questions and we will put it on our website!

Write your article.

Question 3

Your English teacher has asked you to write a story.

Your story must begin with this sentence.

As the plane flew lower, Lou saw the golden beaches of the island below.

Write your story.

3

**B1: Preliminary
Speaking Test**

Part 1 (2–3 minutes)

**Phase 1
Interlocutor**

To both candidates Good morning/afternoon/evening.
Can I have your mark sheets, please?

Hand over the mark sheets to the Assessor.

I'm and this is

To Candidate A What's your name? Where do you live/come from?
Thank you.

To Candidate B And what's your name? Where do you live/come from?
Thank you.

Back-up prompts

B, do you work or are you a student?	Do you have a job? Do you study?
What do you do/study?	What job do you do? What subject do you study?
Thank you.	
And A, do you work or are you a student?	Do you have a job? Do you study?
What do you do/study?	What job do you do? What subject do you study?
Thank you.	

**Phase 2
Interlocutor**

Select one or more questions from the list to ask each candidate.
Ask Candidate A first.

Back-up prompts

How do you get to work/school/university every day?	Do you usually travel by car? (Why/Why not?)
What did you do yesterday evening/last weekend?	Did you do anything yesterday evening/last weekend? What?
Do you think that English will be useful for you in the future? (Why/Why not?)	Will you use English in the future? (Why/Why not?)
Tell us about the people you live with.	Do you live with friends/your family?
Thank you.	

Speaking Test 1

Part 2 (2–3 minutes)

1A Learning a language

Interlocutor Now I'd like each of you to talk on your own about something. I'm going to give each of you a photograph and I'd like you to talk about it.

A, here is your photograph. It shows **people learning a language**.

Place **Part 2** booklet, open at **Task 1A**, in front of candidate.

B, you just listen.
A, please tell us what you can see in the photograph.

Candidate A
⊙ approx. 1 minute

Back-up prompts

- Talk about the people/person.
- Talk about the place.
- Talk about other things in the photograph.

Interlocutor Thank you. (Can I have the booklet please?) Retrieve **Part 2** booklet.

1B At a party

Interlocutor **B,** here is your photograph. It shows **people at a party**.

Place **Part 2** booklet, open at **Task 1B**, in front of candidate.

A, you just listen.
B, please tell us what you can see in the photograph.

Candidate B
⊙ approx. 1 minute

Back-up prompts

- Talk about the people/person.
- Talk about the place.
- Talk about other things in the photograph.

Interlocutor Thank you. (Can I have the booklet please?) Retrieve **Part 2** booklet.

1A



1B



Speaking Test 1 (Work and Relaxation)

Parts 3 and 4 (6 minutes)

Part 3

Interlocutor Now, in this part of the test you're going to talk about something together for about two minutes. I'm going to describe a situation to you.

Place Part 3 booklet, open at Task 1, in front of the candidates.

A young man works very hard, and has only one free day a week. He wants to find an activity to help him relax.

Here are some activities that could help him relax.

Talk together about the different activities he could do, and say which would be most relaxing.

All right? Now, talk together.

Candidates

Approx. 2-3 minutes

Interlocutor

Thank you. (Can I have the booklet please?) Retrieve Part 3 booklet.

Part 4

Interlocutor

Use the following questions, as appropriate:

- What do you do when you want to relax? (Why?)
- Do you prefer to relax with friends or alone? (Why?)
- Is it important to do exercise in your free time? (Why?/Why not?)
- Is it useful to learn new skills in your free time? (Why?/Why not?)
- Do you think people spend too much time working/studying these days? (Why?/Why not?)

Select any of the following prompts, as appropriate:

- How/what about you?
- Do you agree?
- What do you think?

Thank you. That is the end of the test.

Activities to help the man relax



APPENDIX C – B1 Preliminary (Test 2)

Test 1

Listening

LISTENING (approximately 30 minutes)

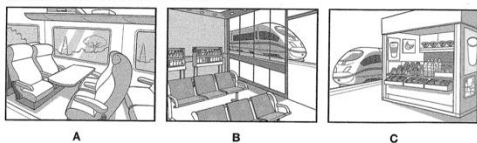
Part 1

Questions 1–7

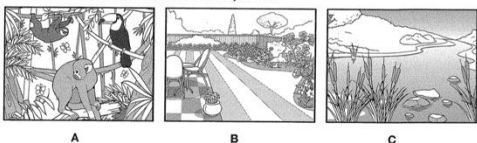
For each question, choose the correct answer.



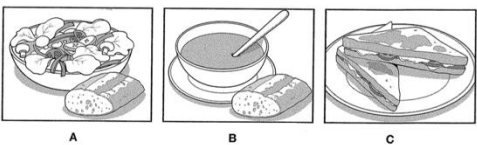
1 Where does the man think he left his wallet?



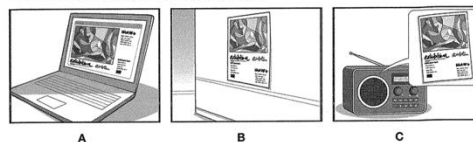
2 What is tomorrow's talk at the Nature Society about?



3 What will the woman order for lunch?



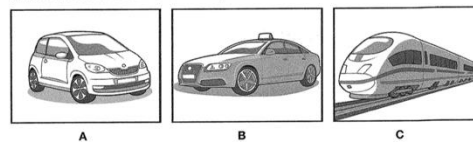
4 How did the woman find out about the exhibition?



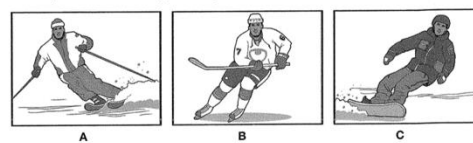
5 What is the woman's brother doing?



6 How will the woman travel to her meeting?



7 Which sport has the man stopped doing?



Part 2

Questions 8–13

For each question, choose the correct answer.



- 8 You will hear two people talking about buying a bicycle. The woman suggests that the man should
- A try looking online.
 - B go to a different shop.
 - C get advice from an expert.
- 9 You will hear a man telling his friend about his Welsh language course. What does the man say about it?
- A The teacher speaks too fast.
 - B The lessons are too long.
 - C The grammar is too difficult.
- 10 You will hear a woman telling her colleague about her weekend. What did the woman like about it?
- A visiting a new place in the city
 - B seeing her children enjoying themselves
 - C having a chance to relax
- 11 You will hear two friends talking about a new restaurant. They both think the restaurant would be better if
- A the food was fresher.
 - B the service was faster.
 - C the prices were cheaper.

22

Test 2

Part 3

Questions 14–19

For each question, write the correct answer in the gap. Write **one or two words** or a **number** or a **date** or a **time**.



You will hear a woman called Kelly Robinson talking about her work as a maker of cartoon films.

The maker of cartoon films

Kelly did a degree in (14) at university.

Kelly really enjoys going to work because of the (15) at the company.

Kelly's department is responsible for creating (16) in cartoons.

At the moment Kelly is trying to develop her (17) skills.

It takes Kelly's company (18) to make a full-length cartoon film.

Kelly's next project will be some cartoons for a (19)

42

- 12 You will hear two old friends talking at a party. How is the man's appearance different from before?
- A He has grown a beard.
 - B He has started wearing glasses.
 - C He has changed his style of clothes.

- 13 You will hear two colleagues talking about a meeting. How does the woman feel about it?
- A annoyed that she will have to attend it
 - B worried that her presentation will be unpopular
 - C surprised that it is still going to take place

23

Listening

Part 4

Questions 20–25

For each question, choose the correct answer.



You will hear an interview with a girl called Rosie Banks, who swims in international competitions.

- 20 Rosie swam a lot when she was very young because
- A her father thought it was an important skill.
 - B she wanted to be like her brother.
 - C there were free classes at her local pool.
- 21 What did Rosie dislike about doing serious swimming training?
- A being away from her friends
 - B the long journey from home
 - C missing some school lessons
- 22 When Rosie won the Swim Stars International competition she was
- A surprised by the public interest.
 - B amazed that she had done so well.
 - C excited about meeting other famous sportspeople.
- 23 Rosie says she needs more help with the cost of
- A transport to competitions.
 - B the kit she needs.
 - C her accommodation while she's abroad.
- 24 What has Rosie changed since she got a new coach?
- A her swimming style
 - B what she eats
 - C her fitness routine
- 25 What is Rosie planning to do in Spain?
- A take part in some races
 - B train with different people
 - C have some time to relax

43

Test 1




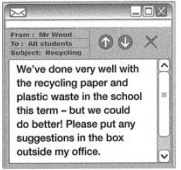

CAMBRIDGE

READING (45 minutes)

Part 1

Questions 1-5

For each question, choose the correct answer.

- 1  **College Shop**
Now is the time to buy essential items like pens and folders – prices reduced until Friday.
Open daily during lunch breaks. Also for 30 minutes after last class everyday apart from Monday.
- 2  Hi Max,
I'm afraid I'll no longer be able to come on the shopping trip tomorrow. My aunt is visiting and didn't give us much notice.
Jake
- 3  **Special Offer**
Order any pizza by 7 p.m. and get another one half-price!
- 4  From: Mr Wood
To: All students
Subject: Recycling
We've done very well with the recycling paper and plastic waste in the school this term – but we could do better! Please put any suggestions in the box outside my office.
- 5  Hi Sam,
Thanks for taking me to the cinema last night. I didn't say at the time but I was a bit frightened! I think I need to watch a comedy next time!
Mel
- A Students must go to the college shop to buy certain items for their studies.
B Students can take advantage of special offers at the college shop at the moment.
C Students may visit the college shop at lunchtime every day except Monday.
- Jake is writing to
A suggest a new date for a shopping trip.
B invite Max to meet one of his relatives.
C cancel an arrangement he had made.
- A All the pizzas in the restaurant are included in this offer.
B Any pizza ordered before 7 p.m. costs less than the usual price.
C At certain times, a customer can get two pizzas for the price of one.

- A Mr Wood has made suggestions on how to recycle waste produced by the school.
B Recycling materials should be put into the box outside Mr Wood's office.
C Mr Wood wants new ideas on ways to improve waste recycling in the school.

- Mel is texting to
A accept Sam's invitation to the cinema.
B admit to Sam that she found the film scary.
C ask when Sam can see another film with her.

Test 1






Reading

Part 2

Questions 6-10

For each question, choose the correct answer.

The people below all want to find a book to read.
On the opposite page there are eight book reviews.
Decide which book would be the most suitable for the people below.

- 6  Ahmed enjoys reading about real people, especially if they tell their own story. He'd like to read a book by someone who's had to deal with difficulties in their life.
- 7  Pritti loves doing all kinds of sport. She'd like to learn as much as possible about top sportspeople from all over the world and how they've managed to achieve their goals.
- 8  Conal loves nature and enjoys writing about it. He wants ideas to help him further develop his writing skills and would love to have a career as a writer.
- 9  Elif likes reading books about adventures. She loves learning about people who did brave things in the past, and how their actions have influenced the way we live today.
- 10  Stefan enjoys travelling and is keen to discover more about other cultures. He also wants to learn how to make typical dishes from a variety of countries.

Book reviews

- A **Being Me**
This book is full of practical advice for anyone who wants to be fit and healthy. Famous sportspeople have contributed their favourite recipes, and you'll also find instructions for a daily exercise routine.
- B **Endless Days**
In this book, the novelist tells the true story of the first pilots to fly across the Atlantic. With plenty of photographs and a detailed discussion of the importance of these events for the modern world, the book successfully brings history to life for readers everywhere.
- C **Action Plan**
Action Plan is all about famous athletes, and there are some amazing photos of them competing. There are also lots of interviews about what they've done to succeed in their careers. You'll find out about things like the food they eat, the number of hours they train, and what they do to prepare for important competitions.
- D **Memories**
The prize-winning author of *Memories* is famous for his unusual writing style and exciting adventure stories. In this book, he takes us on a journey around the world and teaches us a lot about other cultures and their histories. He describes some of the world's most beautiful nature, as well as the many interesting people he has met.
- E **Days in the Sun**
In this book, a well-known author describes his happy early life growing up on a small Irish farm and how travelling around the countryside inspired him to become an author. He describes in detail how he improved his style, and his experiences will interest anyone who is hoping to get their own work published.
- F **Parrots in Paradise**
This newly published adventure story is about a young girl who's lost on a beautiful island with only birds and animals for company. The story deals with some of the difficulties she has, but there's also lots of excitement. If you love well-written fiction, this book's for you!
- G **Night Light**
In *Night Light*, the writer tells us how he became a world-class athlete. He talks about his life as a blind person, and describes the challenges he faced on his way to the top in the world of sports. The book is written in an entertaining and amusing style, which makes it a very enjoyable read.
- H **Our Lives**
This is the perfect book if you're interested in how people live in different parts of the world. It also includes recipes for traditional meals from these places. There are wonderful photos, not only of the people, but also of the wildlife and scenery in each location.

Part 3

Questions 11–15

For each question, choose the correct answer.

Cyclist Vicky Harmiston

Reporter Mark Lewis writes about Vicky Harmiston, who has had a successful career as a track cyclist – a cyclist who races on special race tracks.

When Vicky Harmiston was a child, her parents gave her and her brother Jamie the freedom to decide what they did in their spare time. Vicky chose to do lots of different sports. She was a good swimmer, and the coach at the swimming club she went to thought she might be good enough to become a champion. But the club was a long way from her home so it was difficult for her to fit in the training around her schoolwork. When they were teenagers, Jamie, who loved cycling, bought himself a special track-racing bike and started taking part in competitions. Vicky thought it looked very exciting and decided to try it for herself. She says that was the best decision she ever made. Soon she was cycling every day and doing really well. The track was near her school, which meant it was no problem for her to attend training sessions after school every day.

Vicky went on to have a successful career in track cycling and won several competitions. Then, when she was 28, when she retired from competitive cycling. Vicky told me: 'For years I'd loved winning competitions but I began to get a bit tired of the whole thing – and when the excitement stops, there's no point. Luckily, I went on to have a new career.'

Vicky got a job with a charity called CycleZone. 'We work with young people who have never enjoyed sport,' she says. 'The first thing we do is teach them to ride a bike. We want them to learn to believe in themselves and their own abilities. CycleZone does a great job, and it gets young people together so they're part of a wider group.'

The charity uses celebrities to advertise the work they do. Vicky says, 'I know some people aren't sure whether the support of a celebrity is always positive for a charity. They say the celebrities are only doing it to push themselves forward, which prevents the public from seeing the real work of the charity. But if famous singers and actors, for example, can help, I think they should.'

- 11 When Vicky first started cycling
A she had a very good coach.
B her parents gave her helpful advice.
C she could get to a race track easily.
D her brother gave her a great bike.
- 12 Why does Vicky say she stopped cycle racing?
A She felt she was too old to do it.
B She was becoming bored with it.
C She had won everything she wanted.
D She was preparing for a new career.
- 13 What does the charity CycleZone do for young people?
A It teaches them how to do track racing.
B It supports those who have talent.
C It offers them the chance to try a variety of sports.
D It helps them become more confident.
- 14 According to Vicky, some people believe that celebrities can
A take attention away from what a charity does.
B help people understand a charity's work.
C make the public care less about a charity.
D encourage more people to become involved with a charity.
- 15 What would Vicky say on her blog?

A As a child, I always knew what I wanted to do when I grew up. But I never expected to become so famous.

B If you join CycleZone, you'll get to meet celebrities and learn how they've become successful.

C Although track cycling is not the only sport I've been good at, I've never regretted my choice of career.

D In my spare time I love going to schools and helping groups of children learn to ride bikes.

Part 4

Questions 16–20

Five sentences have been removed from the text below.

For each question, choose the correct answer.

There are three extra sentences which you do not need to use.

At home together

Taimi Taskinen is an 83-year-old woman who lives in a care home called Rudolf House in Helsinki, Finland. A care home is a place where old people can live and be looked after if they don't live with their families. At Rudolf House, there are lots of stairs, so there are some rooms which elderly people can't access easily. As a result, the city council decided to rent these spare rooms to young people. They called this new housing programme 'The House that Fits'.

When Taimi heard about the council's plan, she wondered how it was going to work. **16** She couldn't imagine what she'd have in common with young people who weren't family members. Then, one morning a few days later, a young man appeared outside her room. **17**

'Hi! I'm your new neighbour,' the young man said. 'My name's Jonatan Shaya. Mind if I come in?' 'Please do,' she replied, immediately curious. 'I'll make coffee,' he announced, going into her tiny kitchen. 'Why don't you tell me about yourself?' he asked, as he brought their drinks to the table.

18 She also told him about her family and how much she loved making art.

In turn, 20-year-old Jonatan told Taimi he'd been living in Helsinki with his mother and younger brother until they moved away. He was in the middle of a course in the city, training to become a chef. **19** That's when he heard about 'The House that Fits' on social media. The council's post resulted in over 300 young people applying to live at Rudolf House. They had face-to-face interviews and wrote short essays about why they wanted to live there. **20** And that's how the unlikely friendship between Taimi and Jonatan began.

- A Surprising herself, she talked about growing up in a lakeside town in eastern Finland.
- B Therefore, he needed to find somewhere to live.
- C As a result, she wasn't sure whether the young people had arrived.
- D She'd left the door open, as she always did in the morning.
- E In the end, three of them, including Jonatan, were chosen.
- F Because of this, Jonatan has to be a good neighbour and spend 30 hours a month with Taimi.
- G It would be the first time that anything like this had happened at Rudolf House.
- H Instead, they just talked, as if they'd known each other forever.

Part 5

Questions 21–26

For each question, choose the correct answer.

The invention of crisps

Potato crisps were invented by accident in 1853, by a chef called George Crum. He was extremely (21) of his cookery skills, and the expensive hotel where he worked attracted customers who were (22) to eating only the best food.

One evening, a particularly difficult-to-please guest complained about Crum's fried potatoes. 'They're too thick,' he said, 'too soft, and have no flavour.' He (23) that they should be replaced.

The customer's negative (24) made Crum extremely angry, so he decided to annoy the customer. He cut a potato into paper-thin slices, fried the pieces until they were hard, then put far too much salt on them. 'He'll hate them,' Crum thought. But the customer loved them and ordered more.

News of this new snack travelled fast and an absolutely (25) global industry has grown from Crum's invention – even though his fried potatoes were actually (26) to taste disgusting!

- 21 A proud B satisfied C pleased D impressed
- 22 A prepared B familiar C used D known
- 23 A convinced B wanted C needed D demanded
- 24 A comments B notes C reasons D explanations
- 25 A big B huge C large D wide
- 26 A hoped B intended C attempted D tried

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Test 1

WRITING (45 minutes)

Part 1

You must answer this question.

Write your answer in about 100 words on the answer sheet.

Question 1

Read this email from your English-speaking college classmate Alex and the notes you have made.

EMAIL

From: Alex

Subject: College science presentation

Hi,

It's great that we're going to work together on the college science presentation. Do you think we should choose the rainforest as our topic?

No, but ... We only have two weeks to prepare, so can we start tomorrow?

Suggest ... Where can we go to prepare the presentation? My cousins are staying at my house at the moment, so we can't work there because it's too noisy.

Sorry ... We can give our presentation to the class either in the morning or the afternoon. Which would you prefer?

Let me know

Alex

Tell Alex

Write your email to Alex using all the notes.

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Part 6

Questions 27–32

For each question, write the correct answer.

Write one word for each gap.

Moving house

Hi Alex,

How are you? This week's been a very busy one for me – I finally moved house! (27) wasn't until I started to pack a few days ago that I realised how much stuff I had. I really think moving house is one of the (28) stressful things I've ever done! I was sad to leave my old house – after (29) I'd lived there my whole life so I have lots of good memories.

Anyway, I'm looking (30) to being in this new house. It's not as big as the old one, but (31) least it's got a great garden. I'm planning to have a small party on Saturday night. Are you free then? Why don't you come along (32) you are? I hope you can make it. Let me know.

All the best,

Sam

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Writing

Part 2

Choose one of these questions.

Write your answer in about 100 words on the answer sheet.

Question 2

You see this announcement in an English-language magazine.

Articles wanted!

Is shopping boring?

What do you like and dislike about shopping?

What could shopping centres do to attract more people?

Write us an article answering these questions. The best one will win a prize!

Write your article.

Question 3

Your English teacher has asked you to write a story.

Your story must begin with this sentence.

Jack climbed out of the boat and ran as fast as he could to the beach.

Write your story.

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Speaking tests

Test 1

Note: The visual materials for Speaking Test 1 appear on pages 152 and 153.



Part 1 (2–3 minutes)

Phase 1

Interlocutor

To both candidates Good morning/afternoon/evening.
Can I have your mark sheets, please?

Hand over the mark sheets to the Assessor

I'm and this is

To Candidate A What's your name? Where do you live/come from?
Thank you.

To Candidate B And what's your name? Where do you live/come from?
Thank you.

Back-up prompts

B, do you work or are you a student?

Do you have a job?
Do you study?

What do you do/study?

What job do you do?
What subject do you study?

Thank you.

And A, do you work or are you a student?

Do you have a job?
Do you study?

What do you do/study?

What job do you do?
What subject do you study?

Thank you.

Phase 2

Interlocutor

Select one or more questions from the list to ask each candidate.
Ask Candidate A first.

Back-up prompts

Which day of the week do you like the most? (Why?)

Which day do you like the most? (Why?)

What did you do yesterday evening/last weekend?

Did you do anything yesterday evening/last weekend? What?

Do you think that English will be useful for you in the future? (Why/Why not?)

Will you use English in the future? (Why/Why not?)

Tell us about the people you live with.

Do you live with friends/your family?

What kind of websites do you like? (Why?)

What websites do you like? (Why?)

Which do you prefer, the morning or the afternoon? (Why?)

Which is better, morning or afternoon?

What kind of films do you like?

What films do you like?

What's your favourite type of music? (Why?)

Do you like rock music? (Why/Why not?)

Thank you.

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Test 1

Speaking tests

Part 2 (2–3 minutes)

A Having breakfast

Interlocutor

Now I'd like each of you to talk on your own about something.
I'm going to give each of you a photograph and I'd like you to talk about it.

A, here is your photograph. It shows **people having breakfast**.

Place **Part 2** booklet, open at **Task 1A**, in front of candidate.

B, you just listen.

A, please tell us what you can see in the photograph.

Candidate A

⌚ approx. 1 minute

Back-up prompts

- Talk about the people/person.
- Talk about the place.
- Talk about other things in the photograph.

Interlocutor

Thank you. (Can I have the booklet, please?) Retrieve **Part 2** booklet.

B Cycling

Interlocutor

B, here is your photograph. It shows **people on bicycles**.

Place **Part 2** booklet, open at **Task 1B**, in front of candidate.

A, you just listen.

B, please tell us what you can see in the photograph.

Candidate B

⌚ approx. 1 minute

Back-up prompts

- Talk about the people/person.
- Talk about the place.
- Talk about other things in the photograph.

Interlocutor

Thank you. (Can I have the booklet, please?) Retrieve **Part 2** booklet.

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Reading and books

Parts 3 and 4 (6 minutes)

Part 3

Interlocutor

Now, in this part of the test you're going to talk about something together for about two minutes. I'm going to describe a situation to you.

Place **Part 3** booklet, open at **Task 1C**, in front of the candidates.

A young man enjoys reading books about people with interesting lives. He is looking for a new book to read.

Here are some books he could read.

Talk together about the different books he could read and say which would be most interesting.

All right? Now, talk together.

Candidates

⌚ approx. 2–3 minutes

Interlocutor

Thank you. (Can I have the booklet, please?) Retrieve **Part 3** booklet.

Part 4

Interlocutor

Use the following questions, as appropriate:

- Do you like reading books about people with interesting lives? (Why/Why not?)
- When was the last time you went to a bookshop? (Why/Why not?)
- Have you ever bought a book as a present for someone? (Why/Why not?)
- Do you prefer reading on a screen or reading printed books? (Why/Why not?)
- Do you think people will still read printed books in the future? (Why/Why not?)

Select any of the following prompts, as appropriate:

- How/what about you?
- Do you agree?
- What do you think?

Thank you. That is the end of the test.

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APPENDIX D – Questionnaire (perceptions)

Weekly Course – English

PART I

1. Do you think the way the 60 hours of the class were distributed (2-hour classes Monday to Thursday) might have positively influenced your proficiency results? YES/NO/ I DON'T KNOW

2. Why?

3. Do you think the way the 60 hours of the class were distributed might have negatively influenced your proficiency results? YES/NO/ I DON'T KNOW

4. Why?

5. Do you think your results would have been the same if you had taken the Saturday course? (4hrs in a row once a week) YES/NO/ I DON'T KNOW

6. Why?

7. Do you think your results would have been the same If you had taken the in-person course?

8. Why?

9. Did you practice English outside the class? YES/NO

10. What kind of activities did you do? *For example: doing homework, watching movies or series, reading online, listening to music, speaking with friends or other people in English.*

11. How much time?

a. 1 to 3hrs per week.

b. 4 to 6hrs

c. 7 to 9hrs

d. More than 10 hours

12. Do you think your linguistic abilities have improved during the course?

	YES	NO
Reading Comprehension		
Writing Production		
Listening Comprehension		
Speaking Production		

13. Which skills do you think you have improved the most? Please order them from 1 to 4, 1 being the one that has improved the most and 4 the one that has improved the least.

	1	2	3	4
Reading Comprehension				
Writing Production				
Listening Comprehension				

Speaking Production				
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14. What are the advantages of studying English from Monday to Thursday?

15. What are the disadvantages of studying English from Monday to Thursday?

PART II

Decide to what extent you agree with the following statements. If you completely agree with the statement, please give it a 5. If you completely disagree with the statement, give it a 1. If you don't agree or disagree with it give it a 3 please.

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>I am improving my English level because I am studying it Monday to Thursday every day.</i>					
<i>If I took the Saturday course my English level would advance faster.</i>					
<i>More hours of classes per week would help my English level advance faster.</i>					
<i>If I took the in-person course my English level would advance more.</i>					
<i>If I don't practice outside the class, my proficiency level doesn't improve as much.</i>					

Weekly Course – Spanish

1. ¿Cree usted que la manera en la que las 60 horas de clase fueron distribuidas (**2 horas diarias de lunes a jueves**) pueden haber afectado de manera **positiva** los resultados de su prueba de proficiencia? SÍ/NO/NO SÉ

2. ¿Por qué?

3. ¿Cree usted que la manera en la que las 60 horas de clase fueron distribuidas (**2 horas diarias de lunes a jueves**) pueden haber afectado de manera **negativa** los resultados de su prueba de proficiencia? SÍ/NO/NO SÉ

4. ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Cree que sus resultados hubieran sido los mismos si hubiera tomado el curso únicamente los días sábados (4 horas)? SÍ/NO/NO SÉ

6. ¿Por qué?

7. ¿Cree que sus resultados hubieran sido los mismos si hubiera tomado el curso de manera presencial? SÍ/NO/NO SÉ

8. ¿Por qué?

9. ¿Practicó el idioma inglés en un espacio diferente al brindado en la clase? SÍ/NO

10. ¿Qué tipo de actividades realizó? (Por ejemplo: realizó las tareas asignadas, vio películas, estudió por su cuenta)

11. ¿Cuánto tiempo dedicó a estas actividades? (Si respondió **no** en la **pregunta 5**, puede dejar esta respuesta en blanco)

De 1 a 3 horas semanales.

De 4 a 6 horas semanales.

De 7 a 9 horas semanales.

Más de 10 horas semanales.

12. ¿Cree que sus habilidades lingüísticas mejoraron durante el desarrollo del curso?

	Sí	No
Comprensión lectora (reading)		
Producción escrita (writing)		
Comprensión auditiva (listening)		
Producción oral (speaking)		

13. ¿Cuáles de sus habilidades lingüísticas cree usted que mejoraron más? Por favor organícelas de 1 a 4; **1** siendo la habilidad que usted considera fue la de **mayor progreso** y **4** la que **menos mejoró**.

	1	2	3	4
Comprensión lectora				
Producción escrita				
Comprensión auditiva				
Producción oral				

14. ¿Cuáles son las ventajas de estudiar inglés virtual de lunes a jueves?

15. ¿Cuáles son las desventajas de estudiar inglés virtual de lunes a jueves?

Finalmente, decida en qué medida se encuentra de acuerdo o no con las siguientes afirmaciones. Si está **completamente de acuerdo** con la frase, seleccione el número **5**. Si está

completamente en desacuerdo, seleccione el número **1**. Si le es **indiferente y no está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo**, seleccione el número **3**.

	1	2	3	4	5
Estoy mejorando mi nivel de inglés porque estoy estudiando de manera intensiva (de lunes a jueves).					
Si tomara el curso de los días sábados, y no entre semana, mi nivel de inglés avanzaría más .					
Más horas de clase a la semana me ayudarían a mejorar mi nivel de inglés.					
Si tomara el curso de manera presencial, y no de manera virtual, mi inglés de inglés avanzaría más.					
Si no practico inglés fuera de clase, mi nivel no mejora.					

Saturday Course – English

PART I

1. Do you think the way the 60 hours of the class were distributed (4-hour classes every Saturday) might have positively influenced your proficiency results? YES/NO/ I DON'T KNOW

2. Why?

3. Do you think the way the 60 hours of the class were distributed might have negatively influenced your proficiency results? YES/NO/ I DON'T KNOW

4. Why?

5. Do you think your results would have been the same if you had taken the weekly course? (2hrs every day from Monday to Thursday) YES/NO/ I DON'T KNOW

6. Why?

7. Do you think your results would have been the same If you had taken the in-person course?

8. Why?

9. Did you practice English outside the class? YES/NO

10. What kind of activities did you do? *For example: doing homework, watching movies or series, reading online, listening to music, speaking with friends or other people in English.*

11. How much time?

a. 1 to 3hrs per week.

- b. 4 to 6hrs
- c. 7 to 9hrs
- d. More than 10 hours

12. Do you think your linguistic abilities have improved during the course?

	YES	NO
Reading Comprehension		
Writing Production		
Listening Comprehension		
Speaking Production		

13. Which skills do you think you have improved the most? Please order them from 1 to 4, 1 being the one that has improved the most and 4 the one that has improved the least.

	1	2	3	4
Reading Comprehension				
Writing Production				
Listening Comprehension				
Speaking Production				

14. What are the advantages of studying English online on Saturdays?

15. What are the disadvantages of studying English online on Saturdays?

PART II

Decide to what extent you agree with the following statements. If you completely agree with the statement, please give it a 5. If you completely disagree with the statement, give it a 1. If you don't agree or disagree with it give it a 3 please.

	1	2	3	4	5
<i>I am improving my English level because I am studying it on Saturdays every week.</i>					
<i>If I took the weekly course (Mondays to Thursdays) my English level would advance faster.</i>					
<i>More hours of classes per week would help my English level advance faster.</i>					
<i>If I took the in-person course my English level would advance more.</i>					
<i>If I don't practice outside the class, my proficiency level doesn't improve as much.</i>					

Saturday Course – Spanish

1. ¿Cree usted que la manera en la que las 60 horas de clase fueron distribuidas (**4 horas semanales los días sábados**) pueden haber afectado de manera **positiva** los resultados de su prueba de proficiencia? SÍ/NO/NO SÉ

2. ¿Por qué?

3. ¿Cree usted que la manera en la que las 60 horas de clase fueron distribuidas pueden haber afectado de manera **negativa** los resultados de su prueba de proficiencia? SÍ/NO/NO SÉ

4. ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Cree que sus resultados hubieran sido los mismos si hubiera tomado el curso semanal de lunes a jueves (2 horas diarias)? SÍ/NO/NO SÉ

6. ¿Por qué?

7. ¿Cree que sus resultados hubieran sido los mismos si hubiera tomado el curso de manera presencial? SÍ/NO/NO SÉ

8. ¿Por qué?

9. ¿Practicó el idioma inglés en un espacio diferente al brindado en la clase? SÍ/NO

10. ¿Qué tipo de actividades realizó? (Por ejemplo: realizó las tareas asignadas, vio películas, estudió por su cuenta)

11. ¿Cuánto tiempo dedicó a estas actividades? (Si respondió **no** en la **pregunta 5**, puede dejar esta respuesta en blanco)

De 1 a 3 horas semanales.

De 4 a 6 horas semanales.

De 7 a 9 horas semanales.

Más de 10 horas semanales.

12. ¿Cree que sus habilidades lingüísticas mejoraron durante el desarrollo del curso?

	Sí	No
Comprensión lectora (reading)		
Producción escrita (writing)		
Comprensión auditiva (listening)		
Producción oral (speaking)		

13. ¿Cuáles de sus habilidades lingüísticas cree usted que mejoraron más? Por favor organícelas de 1 a 4; **1** siendo la habilidad que usted considera fue la de **mayor progreso** y **4** la que **menos mejoró**.

	1	2	3	4
Comprensión lectora (reading)				
Producción escrita (writing)				
Comprensión auditiva (listening)				
Producción oral (speaking)				

14. ¿Cuáles son las ventajas de estudiar inglés virtual los días sábados?

15. ¿Cuáles son las desventajas de estudiar inglés virtual los días sábados?

Finalmente, decida en qué medida se encuentra de acuerdo o no con las siguientes afirmaciones. Si está **completamente de acuerdo** con la frase, seleccione el número **5**. Si está **completamente en desacuerdo**, seleccione el número **1**. Si le es **indiferente y no está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo**, seleccione el número **3**.

	1	2	3	4	5
Estoy mejorando mi nivel de inglés porque estoy estudiando de manera semanal todos los sábados.					
Si tomara el curso semanal (de lunes a jueves), mi nivel de inglés avanzaría más .					
Más horas de clase a la semana me ayudarían a mejorar mi nivel de inglés.					
Si tomara el curso de manera presencial, y no de manera virtual, mi inglés de inglés avanzaría más.					
Si no practico inglés fuera de clase, mi nivel no mejora.					