

Recognizing and describing an EFL Bachelor Program under the Distance Education

Modality: A Case Study

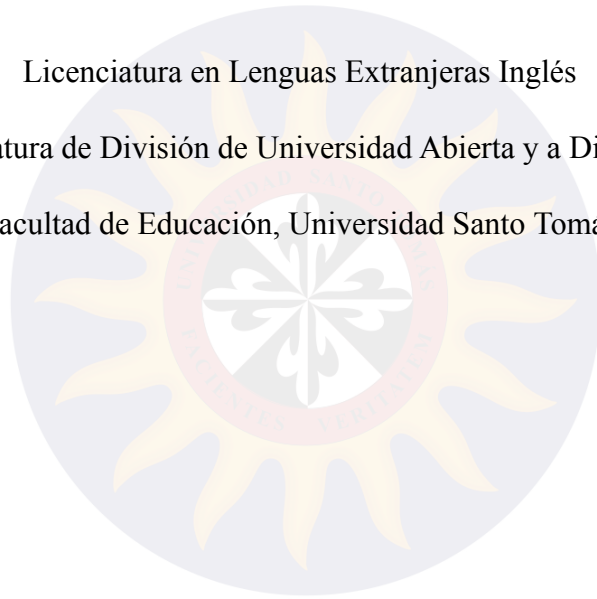
Sheryl Dayana Arias Laverde

Laura Raquel Bello Rodríguez

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés

Decanatura de División de Universidad Abierta y a Distancia

Facultad de Educación, Universidad Santo Tomás



UNIVERSIDAD
SANTO TOMÁS

Table of contents

Abstract	5
Contextualization	6
Research Statement	8
How the Research Emerged	8
How the Researchers Were Aware of Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés	10
Before the Pandemic	10
During the Pandemic	12
Research Question	13
Main Objective	13
Specific Objectives	14
Theoretical Framework	15
Distance Education, Blended Learning, and Virtual Education	15
Distance Education and the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras at Santo Tomas	18
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés (LLEI)	21
Research Design	23
Case Study Design	23
Practical Steps in Getting Started	24
Instruments and Techniques to Data Gathering	27
Instrument 1. Interview With Former Students	28
Instrument 2. Focus Group with Former Students	29
Instrument 3. Comparison of Curricula Among Four EFL Programs in Different Modalities and Institutions with the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras at DUAD	30
Instrument 4. Interview With Three Professional Teachers with Experience in EFL Distance Education Programs and Other Modalities	31
Data Analysis	32
Coding	33
Instrument 1. Interview with Former Students	34
Instrument 2. Focus Group with Former Students	35
Instrument 3. Comparison of curricula between four EFL programs in different modalities and institutions with the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés at DUAD	38
Instrument 4. Interview with three professional teachers with experience in EFL Distance education programs and other modalities	40

Categorization	42
Category 1. Learning EFL at distance	44
Subcategory 1. Teaching and learning strategies	45
Interaction prominence.	46
Subcategory 2. Resources	49
The role of ICT tools.	50
Infrastructure.	52
Subcategory 3. Competences and skills	53
Autonomy and non-dependency processes.	53
Autonomy.	54
Non-dependency.	55
Professional outcomes.	56
Category 2. Policies in EFL	58
Subcategory 1. Governmental and institutional documents	58
High quality accreditation for programs- (CNA, MEN).	59
Resolución 18583 de 2017 - Ministerio de Educación Nacional.	60
Decreto 1330 de 2019 - Ministerio de Educación Nacional.	65
Resolución 15224 de 2020 - Ministerio de Educación Nacional.	66
English and foreign languages' regulations (MEN).	66
Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo - MEN (2018-2022).	67
Programa Nacional de Fortalecimiento del Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras - MEN (2018-2022).	68
Programa Nacional de inglés - MEN (2015 - 2025).	69
Institutional documents on EFL learning and teaching - Universidad Santo Tomás.	70
Acuerdo 28 de 2020. Política y lineamientos para la Formación en Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Santo Tomás a nivel multicampus.	70
Acuerdo 46 de 2014. Reforma de las políticas de adquisición de competencia comunicativa en lengua extranjera en todas las sedes y seccionales de la USTA.	71
Renovación de Registro Calificado. Licenciatura en Lengua Extranjera Inglés (2018).	72
Inferences about governmental requirements.	79
Subcategory 2. EFL curricula in different modalities	80
Curricula contrast findings	80
Category 3. Contribution to society	81
Subcategory 1. Democratization Of Education	81
No barriers to learn.	82
Theorization and findings	85

Assumptions and preconceptions about distance education	85
Autonomy as an important skill	85
Democratizing education	86
Policies of distance education and its quality	86
The relation between interaction, ICT tools, and infrastructure in distance education	87
Reflections about the arrival of a pandemic and its meaning for distance education learners and teachers	88
Contributions and Implications	89
Scope for Further Research	91
Annexes	92
Annex A. Former students' interview	92
Annex B. Former students' demographic information	92
Annex C. Focus group questions	93
Annex D. Comparative charts between curriculums	95
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD – Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés Universidad Distrital (Public University)	95
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD – Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (Public University)	95
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD – Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas con Énfasis en Inglés Universidad La Gran Colombia (Private University)	96
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD – Licenciatura en inglés at EDUPOL in partnership with Corporación Universitaria del Caribe - CECAR (Private University)	97
Annex E. Teachers' interview questions	98
Annex F. Data analysis	99
References	100

Abstract

Distance education is a modality that is still unknown to many people, leading into a misunderstanding and misuse of the term. Even though technological advances have improved many aspects of education globally, it has been a controversial topic when people decide how to study a professional career. However, distance modality is as qualified as any other modality with different resources and mediations. For this, the purpose of this study is to describe the contributions of the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés at DUAD - Universidad Santo Tomás program under the distance modality through the methodology of a case study. The data was collected through interviews and a focus group conducted with former students and teachers; an inquiry and comparison of curricula with similar programs from other universities; and a consultation of governmental and official documents that rule EFL bachelor programs. The data analysis was conducted using the methodology of coding and categorization, classifying the information, and breaking it down to make sense of it. After defining categories, the findings and results were theorized into the topics of interaction and its resources, autonomy as one of the principal skills of the modality, democratization of education, policies, assumptions related to the modality, and some reflections related to the arrival of the pandemic in 2020; all of that to validate and recognize the EFL program at DUAD under study and its modality.

Keywords: Autonomy, Case study, Democratization, Distance education, EFL teaching and learning, Policies in EFL.

Contextualization

The object of this research study emerged from the researchers' experiences since they studied at the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés at Universidad Santo Tomás under the distance modality. It was the best option at that time, considering some aspects of funds, time availability, multiple roles, and family time. However, when they had conversations about this matter with other people like neighbors, relatives, friends, and coworkers, their perspectives were contradictory about the modality: some people said that studying on a distance learning course was too easy, others that it was too difficult, others thought that a language could not be learned at distance, others mentioned that face to face interaction with the teachers was a must and for that reason, this modality was not a good option, among other opinions. Thus, this research study intends to validate the quality of a professional career under this modality with total objectivity and responsibility.

To conduct this research study, the researchers decided to follow the Case Study design. At first, it was going to be conducted through the narrative inquiry, however, due to the amount of data collected and the different paths the study took, they found out that the EFL teaching and learning program under the distance modality offered by DUAD - Universidad Santo Tomás was a phenomenon that required more sources of information and perspectives than the narration of the participants. In that way, this research study is more aligned with the Case Study methodology because it has data from multiple sources, it examines a phenomenon that happens in a real-life context, and it uses theoretical grounding to support the results (Griffie, 2012).

According to the Research Fields required at the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés (LLEI) at DUAD - Universidad Santo Tomás, this study can support the Macroproject

“Understanding and Characterizing EFL in the LLEI: Experiences and phenomena in the pre-service teachers’ education contexts” and the subproject 4 “Understanding English teaching and learning contexts in EFL education” because it allows to understand the object of this study, its context and realities, allowing the researchers to describe and characterize the EFL bachelor program at DUAD under the distance modality.

The contribution that the researchers want to provide with this study is focused on different participants related to the phenomenon. First, to the former students, they want to provide security that this ELF bachelor program meets all the quality standards required by the government, regardless of the modality. Second, to the program, they want to recognize the efforts of the administrators and teachers to ensure the correct operation of the program, following all the requirements established by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) and the Comité Nacional de Acreditación (CNA).

Research Statement

How the Research Emerged

The research idea originated from the researchers' own experience. When they were starting to study and decided to choose the distance education modality as the best option to access higher education at that time, they received a lot of comments from external people (relatives, neighbors, friends, and work colleagues) trying to convince them that Distance Education was not a good idea to get a degree, and more importantly, that learning a language at distance was not possible. Nevertheless, several factors such as financial problems, availability of time, and other roles they needed to play in life apart from studying, made choosing this modality the only option to carry on.

Due to the different situations and daily life activities that most people currently face, studying a professional degree can be seen as a very distant possibility and a big challenge. The fact of working full-time, having family and children, living in a remote area, and financial problems often become obstacles and even excuses for not achieving the goal of studying a professional career. Unfortunately, many people are not well-informed or do not know about options such as Virtual and Distance Education that might be a good option to study without leaving on a side their life occupations and context, something flexible that can be adapted to their needs.

In general terms, there is misinformation about these modalities. There are beliefs that those modalities are not as qualified as the face-to-face ones. For some people, they are too easy and for some others, too difficult. Also, some think that those modalities do not have a solid teaching and learning process.

However, people who have studied and worked under these modalities, especially the Distance Education modality, can provide other opinions about their process through experiences (good and bad) and how they have contributed to their professional development. In addition, there are official documents that evidence the quality of distance modality, like the Figure 1, taken from the web page of the Santo Tomás University.

Figure 1.

Educación abierta y a distancia en la Universidad Santo Tomás.



Note. Retrieved from *Educación abierta y a distancia* [screenshot] by Universidad Santo Tomás, 2017, Ustadistancia (<https://bit.ly/3yDwUuv>) ©.

For all the above, the main objective of this study was to validate and demystify that Distance Education could prepare professionals the same way as any other language professional program in the country and that there are not big differences between distance and face to face modalities. In addition, this study also aimed to explore the influence of learning English as a foreign language in a distance modality based on the perceptions and experiences of former students and teachers.

How the Researchers Were Aware of Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés

In the case of Arias, she knew about this program because of an administrative practice she was doing within the administrative office of the bachelor program at Universidad Santo Tomás. She thought that it was interesting to learn English at a distance because it was going to let her work while studying and that she did not have to attend classes all day, just on Saturdays. This, from her point of view, implied less expenses in transportation, copies, and food outside her home. Then, there was an opportunity to get a scholarship with the ICETEX and the Universidad Santo Tomás was one of the universities offered; it was an economic opportunity as well.

Regarding Bello, she wanted to study something related to music, she tried to look for different options and Universities. However, in terms of financial resources, time and location none of those options were suitable for her. At that point, she decided to work and save some money to pay for her studies. Influenced by her oldest brother, who was a music teacher and who had studied at Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras at Santo Tomás University, she decided to study this same professional career; her brother told her about the benefits she could get.

Before the Pandemic

With the arrival of the COVID-19 virus, there have been huge changes regarding education, and the process of learning and teaching languages through face-to-face and distance/virtual modalities. Before this virus arrived, there were a lot of thoughts and perceptions about distance learning, both promoters and detractors.

Not too many years ago, García (2012) provides a brief description of the struggle that distance education has faced for more than two centuries and mentions that it has been winning for about 25 years in comparison with traditional educational settings.

To sum up this, the author says that:

“En definitiva, ganan estos formatos de enseñanza y aprendizaje por las limitaciones de los sistemas convencionales y por el propio aporte suplementario de los sistemas a distancia y porque la educación a distancia es hoy la forma de enseñar y aprender de mayor crecimiento especialmente en el ámbito universitario.” (p. 22).

A few years later, *Finders* (2017) made a comparison between learning a language at distance or face-to-face, mentioning that learning at distance was a good option for those who had to work and study at the same time, requiring time-organization and independence. However, for people who had the time to attend classes, it was always the best option, because “...la interacción profesor-alumno-compañeros es muy importante a la hora de aprender. Cuando se trata de estudiar un idioma, esta interacción es particularmente importante porque la adquisición de una lengua implica conversación, entrenamiento de comprensión oral e incluso lenguaje corporal.” [Teacher-student-classmates interaction is important when learning. When it comes to studying a language, this interaction is particularly important because language acquisition involves conversation, listening training, and even body language.].

In 2018, *Universia* wrote about the effectiveness of learning languages online and pointed out that learning itself required implication and commitment. Also, that learning online was not easy and whoever that thought it would be easier than face-to-face learning, must abandon the idea of learning that way.

During the Pandemic

After the pandemic there were multiple opinions and predictions about how distance education and language learning are going to be measured and presented. *El País* magazine (2020), questioned if it is possible to learn a language from home and based on an application called *ABA English*, took the example of several people that were able to learn English to get promoted to their jobs. This magazine mentions that this application has more than 30 million users that learn through an innovative methodology that uses speaking sessions to practice.

Something interesting they mention is that:

Formatos de aprendizaje como ABA English, que evolucionan para adaptarse a los intereses de los alumnos y no al revés, alejados de métodos obsoletos en los que todos aprenden lo mismo, de la misma forma y con el mismo ritmo. Es un aprendizaje online con la cercanía del presencial y que eliges según tus gustos o necesidades. [Learning formats such as ABA English, which evolve to adapt to the interests of the students and not the other way around, away from obsolete methods in which everyone learns the same thing, in the same way and at the same pace. It is an online learning with the proximity of the classroom and that you choose according to your tastes or needs.].

In contrast, *Portafolio* magazine (2020) shares some experiences that language institutions have had during the pandemic and some changes regarding the way they operate, focused on the inclusion of online learning. More specifically, the president of American School Way, one of the biggest language schools of the country mentioned that “Entendemos que la educación virtual es interesante y valiosa, como complemento pero creemos que está sobrevalorada, además que no está certificada,” [We understand that virtual education is

interesting and valuable, as a complement, but we believe that it is overrated, and that it is not certified]. Nevertheless, the director of *Academia Smart*, another huge languages' institution, mentioned that this has been an opportunity for expanding their offered courses and the launching of a virtual platform to continue business.

More recently, *Agencia NotiPress* (2021) mentioned some proposals to face the challenges of distance education that have taken more importance after almost one year after the pandemic arrived and that are based on scientific research. Some of those proposals include conducting evaluation based on the students' competences to avoid cheating on exams, eye tracking in virtual classes, and motivation to study for students that decided to quit.

They pointed out that there is still a lot to do before making distance education effective during pandemic times, but that there are also several proposals to achieve the educational outcomes.

All the aspects depicted in the research statement brought the researchers to state the following research question.

Research Question

How does distance education modality in EFL teaching and learning at Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras - Universidad Santo Tomás contribute to the education of English teachers in Colombia?

Main Objective

To describe the contributions of Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés in a distance modality to the education of English teachers in Colombia.

Specific Objectives

- To explore the students and teachers' perceptions about EFL programs at distance education modality.
- To analyze and contrast EFL curricula implemented in a face-to-face and distance education in Colombia.
- To identify language and education policies that rule EFL programs in a face-to-face and distance modality.

Theoretical Framework

Distance Education, Blended Learning, and Virtual Education

Before defining what distance, education is, it is important to understand what blended learning, e-learning or virtual/online learning are, so we can compare and differentiate modalities from what distance education is. It is common to confuse distance education with other modalities and types of learning such as e-learning, online learning, and virtual education because of the use of ICT tools and the role that they have in higher education; but the reality is that, depending on the focus of each modality, the resources will differ.

To Barberá (2013), distance education is formal, based on an institution in which the learning group is separated from a physical classroom and their teacher most of the time, the ICT tools are used instead to connect students, resources, and tutors. Distance education is characterized by the student being physically separated from the teacher, and technological resources are provided to facilitate the interaction between the students and the teacher. Regarding blended learning, Kim (2007) mentioned that it “...may be defined as a combination of classroom learning and e-learning.” (p. 1). This means that a course with the blended learning methodology considers not only physical-class and formal settings, but also virtual and online learning to ensure that the interaction occurs in both traditional and current methodologies.

On the other hand, there is online or virtual learning, which is defined by Cabrera (2006), as cited in Quijada-Monroy (2014), as a distance modality which is supported by the internet and facilitates communication between the teacher and the students through synchronous and asynchronous resources and the main characterization is the lack of face-to-face interactions, but the reinforcement of technological resources.

According to Guri-Rosenblit (2005), all forms of learning and teaching through ICT (e-learning, virtual classrooms, online instruction, among others) can be referred to as “e-learning”, which is not always used for distance education purposes. Moreover, distance education in higher education systems is not always and uniquely delivered through the new electronic media. About this, this author stated that:

The lack of distinction between ‘e-learning’ and ‘distance education’ accounts for much of the misunderstanding of the ICT roles in higher education, and the wide gap between the rhetoric in the literature describing the sweeping future effects of the ICT on educational environments and their actual implementation. (p. 469).

Different factors differentiate ‘e-learning’ from distance education, but some of the most relevant ones are:

- **Remoteness and proximity:** Distance education is meant for people that cannot attend face-to-face classrooms because they live far away from the physical environment; however, some face-to-face encounters enrich the learning process. On the contrary, e-learning does not care about the physical location of the students, as any person can choose to learn virtually. This type of learning does not require face-to-face interaction, as nature is to meet virtually.
- **Target people:** Distance education students can be considered special, contemplating the various roles they perform while studying. For example, they work full time while studying part-time, or they have family duties that do not allow them to study full time. On the other hand, e-learning is used by all types of students at all educational levels.

“E-learning is by no way exclusively meant for distance learners.” (p. 473) mentioned Guri-Rosenblit (2005).

- **Cost regard:** Distance education offers access to higher education by providing lower costs as compared to classroom teaching in campus universities. However, it is frequent to find that effective e-learning costs more than conventional face-to-face teaching.

It is important to note that EFL distance education, EFL blended education, and EFL e-learning are similar fields of education, however, they are not to be confused. White (2006), mentioned that “many language learners, teachers, and researchers have sensed the convenience and potential of new language learning environments in distance education - and in related fields such as online learning, distributed learning, and blended learning” (p. 247).

Altunay (2019), refers to EFL distance education as a preferred method to learn a foreign language since, due to different situations in life (such as financial reasons, workload, and other responsibilities), students are not able to learn through traditional settings. Thus, students under the distance education modality can improve a foreign language because they can attend virtual classes at any time, from any place, and using any technological device connected to the internet. In the same way, “learners can be involved in interactive activities, they can be exposed to authentic language, and interact with tutors and other learners” (p. 122).

Regarding EFL blended education, Al Zumor, Al Refaai, Eddin, & Al-Rahman (2013) conducted a study regarding the students’ perceptions about different methodologies (e-learning and blended learning) while studying EFL and concluded that, blended learning can contribute to the fulfillment of the gap between teaching and learning, as well as enriching the students’ overall English skills (reading, writing, spelling, listening, grammar, pronunciation, and

speaking). Also, this methodology facilitates an environment to effectively employ indirect language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990) as cited in Al Zumor, et al. (2013).

Ochoa & Roberto (2011) pointed out that blended learning allows students to surpass what is learned in the classroom and try out different interactive strategies “as an extension of the direct teaching classes” (p. 156). Among the conclusions they reached about this methodology, they highlighted that student have multiple sources of information from the classroom and from the online environment. In addition, students develop skills of autonomy towards their English learning process.

On the other hand, Soliman (2014) highlights that e-learning can complement EFL face-to-face classes through different resources and activities like chats, forums, quizzes, surveys, among others. This author indicates that if those resources are used effectively, this methodology can “enhance language proficiency and independent learning” (p. 756).

To summarize the above and based on the theory found, it can be concluded that distance education has a specific characteristic that differentiates it from similar methodologies: because of different reasons, students are either physically separated from the teacher or chronologically disorganized from academic schedules. Regarding e-learning and blended learning, students from both methodologies could attend face-to-face classes, but it does not mean that they are separated by time or place.

Distance Education and the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras at Santo Tomas

In the beginning, a group of teachers incited by the Principal and the Dean of the school of Education did an investigation of experiences in Distance Education carried out in Europe.

After that, in 1976 Universidad Santo Tomás - Bogotá opened the first Philosophy and Religion program at distance and 210 students were enrolled. (Universidad Santo Tomás, n.d.).

Because the great acceptance of the philosophy and religion programs, Universidad Santo Tomás that same year founded the "Centro de Enseñanza Descolarizada" (CED, something independent of the philosophy faculty but linked to the academic vice-rector oriented to distance learning (Universidad Santo Tomás). In the second semester of that year, new offices were opened in Cartagena, Ibagué, Cali, and Medellín; a new campus was also opened and in 1981, Postgraduate and master's programs in Education appeared. (Universidad Santo Tomás, n.d.).

With the presidency of Belisario Betancur (1982-1986), the Unisur program was launched to expand Distance Education, in this manner, this modality could reach every region of Colombia. Faced with this, the Santo Tomas University adjusted its program to strengthen the social projection and growth of the regions through professional development and practices of their community without taking them out of context. In the years 1982 and 1983 two decrees were issued (2412 and 1820) that gave a legal framework to the Distance Education modality (Universidad Santo Tomás, n.d.)

The first one (Decreto 2412) defines the regulation objectives, management, and inspection processes; the second one (Decreto 1820) establishes the regulation about opening and starting programs under this modality. In 1983 the university opened new programs focused on training professionals in Educations and technological programs, additionally, university Assistance centers (CAUs) were opened. These technological and bachelors' programs were oriented towards development of rural zones, helping to improve life conditions, and achieving a connection between the University and the community. Thus, the community development

projects proposed or carried out by the regional assistance center should be assumed by students and professionals developing social impact activities such as: developing academic improvement plans in schools and colleges in the region and surroundings, creation of micro-businesses, work in conjunction with governments and mayors, creation of schools, plans for ecological improvement, etc.

In conjunction with this, Universidad Santo Tomás pointed out that:

Como respuesta al llamado del Gobierno de promover la universidad a distancia, en 1983 la Universidad Santo Tomás ajustó el Plan Integrado de Universidad Abierta y a Distancia y Desarrollo de la Comunidad, un plan que tenía el objetivo de integrar la enseñanza y el desarrollo y pretendía dar un nuevo concepto de universidad inserta en la comunidad, ofreciendo al estudiante la posibilidad de no desvincularse de su medio. [In response to the government's call to promote distance university, in 1983 the Santo Tomás University adjusted the Integrated Plan for Open and Distance University and Community Development, a plan that had the objective of integrating teaching and development and pretended to give a new concept of university inserted in the community, offering the student the possibility of not leaving their environment].

Due to its great welcoming and success of Centro de Enseñanza Desescolarizada (CED) and counting with more than 10,000 students in 1995 was issued the decree 03 in October 25th by the higher council of the university, by which the CED becomes in VUAD (Vicerrectoría de Universidad Abierta y a Distancia).

For more than forty years Universidad Santo Tomas in the Distance Modality Education has been committed to the development of professionals according to the regional and national

demands of our country, During the most recent years, there was a change in the university's canonical name, from "Vicerrectoría de Universidad Abierta y a Distancia" to "Decanatura de Universidad Abierta y a Distancia" (DUAD).

Regarding the bachelor's degree in English as a Foreign Language or Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés (LLEI hereafter) is an academic program that belongs to the Decanatura de División de Universidad Abierta y a Distancia (DUAD) at Universidad Santo Tomás. It is a distance program that implements Information and Communications Technology (ICT). This technology includes communication devices or applications encompassing cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, to teach foreign languages mainly English.

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés (LLEI)

The B.A. of English as a Foreign Language is an academic program that responds to the requirements of an open and distance education as an innovative and demanding methodology that allows the access to the higher education with quality and that has emerged in correspondence with the international, national, and institutional policies to teach the pedagogy in Foreign Languages (Universidad Santo Tomas, n.d).

The Minister of Education granted to the program the Registro Calificado with the Resolución n° 2270 from March 8, 2019, to teach and learn English as a Foreign Language in 12 regions of Colombia: Barranquilla, Bogotá, Bucaramanga, Cali, Chiquinquirá, Cúcuta, Manizales, Medellín, Neiva, Pasto, Tunja, and Villavicencio. Each region has a students' university assistance center called "CAU" (Centro de Atención Universitaria) where students

could attend face to face tutoring sessions. Regarding the characterization of the students' community, they have different backgrounds; they come from urban and countryside regions.

For example, it is very frequent to find pre-service teachers from rural areas, such as Arauca, Buenaventura, or other cities far from the main capitals. On the other hand, there are pre-service teachers who live in the city and urban areas, but because of their jobs and daily-life occupations, they do not have the time to attend face-to-face classes. So, they have chosen this LLEI because of the distance modality. Another important factor has to do with the financial aspect, because the tuition fees are more affordable compared to similar universities in face-to-face traditional education (face-to face modality).

Research Design

Case Study Design

According to Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017), there are several definitions and descriptions presented across the literature, to understand the Case Study Design (CSD). The case study strength is that it can illustrate issues and turn up possible explanations: essentially a search for meaning - as is all research. Case study research is also concerned with studying the phenomenon in context, so that the findings generate insight into how the phenomenon occurs within a given situation (Gillham, 2020). The aim of case study research is to dig deep, look for explanations and gain understanding of the phenomenon through multiple data sources and through this understanding extend or test theory.

For Yin (2000) as cited in Griffiee (2012), a case study must have three aspects, which can serve as a definition: it must have data from multiple sources, examine something in a real-life context, and use theory to generalize results. Another fundamental characteristic is that in a case study the researchers do not start out with a priori theoretical notions - because until you get in there and get hold of your data, get to understand the context, you will not know what theories or explanations work best or make the most sense (Gillham, 2000).

Thanks to the characteristics of the present inquiry in which the researchers explained systematically and in detail the phenomenon of the EFL teaching-learning program at distance modality, the researchers wanted to achieve something different from understanding what ordinary people commonly think about distance education and their perceptions of learning languages under the distance modality. Combined with the fact that the researchers should experience the development of this inquiry during the revolutionary times of COVID-19, we had

the opportunity to study the insights of the EFL teaching and learning at distance before and during the pandemic.

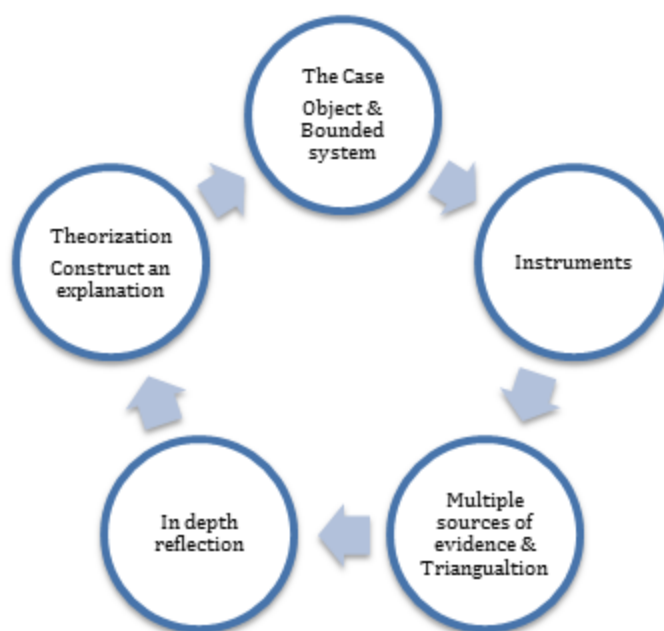
Thus, the researchers interviewed four former students and conducted a focus group with them afterwards; they interviewed three English teachers who teach in the face-to-face modality but also at distance; finally, they did a comparison among three B.A. language programs offered by different universities: UNAD, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas and Corporación Universitaria del Caribe - CECAR. We contrasted their curriculums and the one by the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD to get information about similarities and differences.

After reviewing several research designs, we found that the Case Study was the most suitable research design to answer the research question and the objectives of the present inquiry. At the beginning, we considered that the Narrative inquiry was the appropriate design to conduct the research, since we thought that the best way to answer the question was to narrate the perceptions, experiences, and story of the former students. However, after analyzing the information they were providing, we realized that we needed to inquire more about the distance education modality, not only from the former students' point of view, but also from other resources like official documents, and other participants of the modality like teachers.

For that reason, we selected the Case Study design because its objective is to understand English teaching and the importance in EFL education instead of narrating the voices of EFL teaching and learning realities (based on the research field at the LLEI program).

Practical Steps in Getting Started

In Figure 2, we organize the steps we considered developing this research study.

Figure 2.*Fundamental elements of a Case Study*

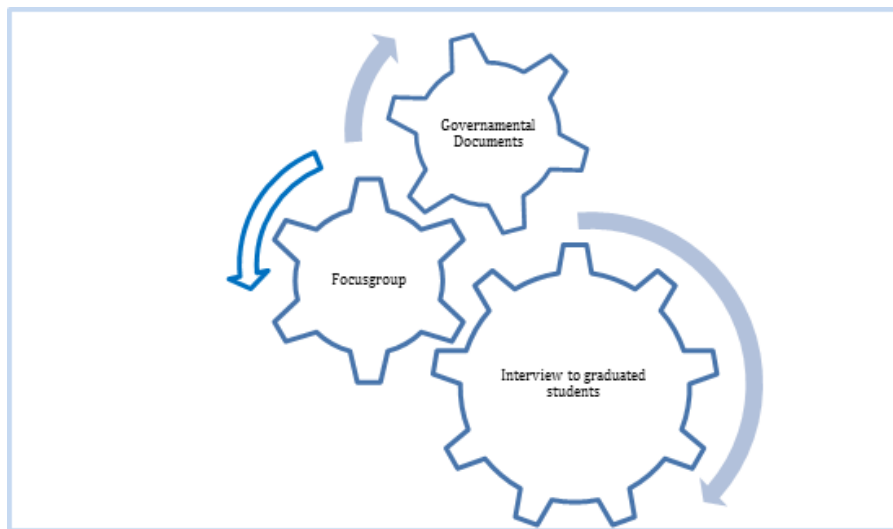
Note. Adapted from *An introduction to second language research methods* [ebook] by Griffee, 2012, TESL-EJ Publications.

For Stake & Merriam as cited in Harrison (2017), the researchers in a case study must define the object of case study research as being the object of the study (the bounded system) adding that case study research focuses on a particular thing and that the product of an investigation should be descriptive and heuristic in nature. (Harrison, et al., 2017). In this research, the researchers drew the limit of the study by the boundaries represented by the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés at División de Educación Abierta y a Distancia DUAD, Universidad Santo Tomás Colombia since it represents the modality, the program, and the institution in which the researchers have been trained.

Although for Hamel (2013) research tradition allows the object of study to emerge gradually, he also favors a tradition that researchers must carefully define the object of study before the study begins, or at least as part of the initiation of the study. In this sense, the object of study is the same as or like the construct.

Figure 3.

Case study design, bounded system



Note. The visualization of a case study design showing a bounded case with three sections and multiple interior dynamics.

Instruments and Techniques to Data Gathering

Although case study tends to be categorized as part of the qualitative research tradition, as with any design, case study design can accommodate either quantitative or qualitative data. Popular data collection instruments in the Case Study Design include interviews, participant observation, tests, textbooks, field logs, as well as documents such as class syllabuses, handouts, and homework assignments.

For data collection and to achieve the proposed objectives, the researchers selected four L.L.E.I former students and three professional teachers with experience in EFL teaching and learning at distance. This selection responds to the proposal of Etikan, Musan and Alkassim (2016) and the Purposive Sampling theory, defined as “the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses.” (p. 2). For this study, then, the participants were selected for their qualities: their significant experiences and their points of view. To make a successful sampling, it was necessary to study the Maximum Variation Sampling method, which considers the issue from different angles.

During this process, it was necessary to determine a favorable number of participants, each of them belonging to a different context from the other participants, this difference should also apply to their antecedents and living conditions: despite these differences, there was the same context of interest in research. In the first and second instruments, they studied the same undergraduate university program and under a distance modality. In another instrument, researchers made an interview with teachers with experience in Distance and Face to Face programs.

All in all, the researchers applied four instruments to gather valuable data and be able to answer the research question. Also, to consider different aspects that emerged at the beginning of the study and during the process of data collection. The instruments were: a) An interview with former students; b) A focus group with the same participants; c) An inquiry and comparison of curricula from other universities with similar EFL programs under face-to-face, virtual and distance modalities; d) An interview with EFL teachers who have first-hand experience with the distance modality.

Instrument 1. Interview With Former Students

It consisted of an interview of six questions with the purpose of gathering information about four former students of the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés program at DUAD that currently are in different aspects of application of their careers. It was focused on how their experience was studying this career under the distance modality, their current performance as EFL teachers, and their opinions about the research topic. Likewise, it was a semi-structured interview to facilitate the interaction: a conversation to gather the most real and natural information possible.

The interview was conducted through a video call with the participants using the Google Meet technology tool on May 6th of 2020 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, which was recorded to support the analysis. Each participant was summoned at a different time because of their time availability; meeting times were arranged through email and WhatsApp chats, so each interview was personalized. These interviews had a duration within 30 and 60 minutes each, depending on the type of answers provided by each participant and what they deepened on each question based on their own point of view and experience. Each participant felt free to answer and ask questions,

since it felt like a usual conversation with a colleague from the same career and university. The questions used in this interview can be found in the Annex A.

The participants' age range goes from 29 to 49 years old, being only a few years of difference from the time they graduated, which happened in 2018 and 2019. Their socioeconomic background differs from different cities, with different purposes but the same objective of receiving the higher education, different learning and teaching perspectives, and other aspects that make them unique, as well as their experience with the Distance Education modality, which is the focus of this study. Those demographic details are reviewed in depth in the Annex B.

Instrument 2. Focus Group with Former Students

It was a semi-structured group interview with the same group of participants from the previous instrument, that included at least ten questions to delve into some aspects mentioned by the participants in the first interview relating their overall opinion about pedagogy, methodology, and how they perceived their experience as teachers in training under the distance modality in contrast to their current teaching practice.

This instrument was conducted through a video call using the Google Meet tool on October 7, 2020, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM and this session was recorded as evidence with permission of the participants. The session had a duration of 120 minutes, including the time of introduction to it and the conclusions discussed with the group.

Due to the nature of the instrument, it was essential to have all the participants attending at the same time, thence, the time and date selected for this instrument was previously arranged with all the participants depending on their time availability and different occupations.

During the interview, the participants had the choice to speak in English or in Spanish, depending on their confidence level, but in the end, it was easier to speak in Spanish since it is their native language. The dynamic was that researchers made questions and each participant had the chance to answer from his/her point of view and experience.

However, each of them had turns to speak, one by one, giving their opinion or sharing their experience. There were some questions that could not be answered by some participants due to one of them arriving late to the meeting and others had to leave before finishing. At the end, the last question was answered by two of the participants. The complete questionnaire for this focus group can be reviewed in Annex C.

Instrument 3. Comparison of Curricula Among Four EFL Programs in Different Modalities and Institutions with the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras at DUAD

It consisted in an in-depth review of four EFL programs' curricula from different universities such as Universidad Distrital, Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (UNAD), Universidad La Gran Colombia, EDUPOL in partnership with Corporación Universitaria del Caribe - CECAR; all of them with different modalities. The information was taken from the internet and official pages of these educational institutions. The universities and the programs were selected because of the similarity in the name, subjects and title offered, since the objective was to revise similar programs, with the same approach, regardless of the modality under which they were developed.

The process of comparison started with taking each program offered by other universities, observing the similarities and differences it offers compared to the EFL bachelor at Santo Tomas University, and filling out a chart where characteristics of the two programs were highlighted,

such as number of credits, similarities or differences in subjects, number of academic fields, and duration. The comparative chart developed between those four programs and the LLEI at DUAD can be revised profoundly in the Annex D.

Instrument 4. Interview With Three Professional Teachers with Experience in EFL Distance Education Programs and Other Modalities

This instrument consisted of a semi-structured interview of at least eleven questions with the aim of gathering three teachers' perceptions about EFL teaching and learning at distance and inquiring about their experience working with the distance and face-to-face modalities. The teachers were selected because of their experience working not only under the distance modality but also face-to-face, so they could provide a clear contrast as well as experiences and anecdotes.

It was conducted through a video call using the technological tool Google Meet. One interview with two teachers took place on April 22, 2021, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, and the interview with the other teacher took place on May 1st, 2021 from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Each session had a duration of 60 minutes, which depended on the time they took to answer some questions they wanted to deepen on. These meetings were recorded in order to help the analysis of data.

Dates to carry out these interviews were previously arranged with the participants, having the opportunity to interview two teachers at the same time because of their availability of time, which made the experience more conversational. Something that provided an added value to the interviews was that two of the participants had experience with the accreditation process of a professional program at distance, so some questions were dedicated to their experience through the procedure. The questions used in this interview can be found in the Annex E.

Data Analysis

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), the purpose of the Case Study Design (CSD) observation “is to probe deeply and to analyze intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs” (p. 185).

The terms probe deeply and analyze intensively may be taken to mean that CSD does not accept surface data at face value but seeks through analysis to create a deeper explanation of the data. Multifarious phenomena may mean that whatever deeper explanation is created, it has multiple aspects, in somewhat the same way a diamond has multiple reflecting surfaces. There is no way to know for sure if all the phenomena have been investigated, but we can report the ones we found. Generalizations about a wider population to which the unit belongs may mean that the unit is of interest not only for its own sake, but for what it can tell us about some part of the world that interests us (Griffie, 2012).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) propose three approaches to analyzing qualitative data that are instructive for researchers and readers of qualitative research. These three approaches to analysis can be thought of as being placed variously along a continuum ranging from a low level of interpretation and abstraction engaged in by the researcher, to the higher level of interpretation and abstraction required for theory building. The first approach, which they compare to the work of a journalist, is that taken by the researcher who intends to present the data with almost no analysis. The second approach is a more accurate descriptive work, and the purpose of the researcher is to present focused description. The third approach is concerned with building theory.

Coding

Creswell (2007) and Creswell (2012a) as cited in Akinyode, B. F., & Khan, T. H. (2018) defined coding as the procedure of fragmenting and classifying text to form explanations and comprehensive themes in the data. Coding aims at reducing the data by sorting the information transcript into manageable and meaningful transcript segments with the aid of a coding framework.

Data coding in qualitative research means assigning labels or codes to different sections of text that are related with different problems. ‘Open’ coding aims at identifying the discrete concepts while ‘Axial’ coding is primarily to designate the way links are made in new ways between the groups and sub-groups (Walker and Myrick, 2006; Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Coding helps in separating data into categories of themes so that data from different sources can be easily organized and compared.

According to Shkedi (2005), the purpose was to sort, arrange, manage, develop, and modify the data. This aimed at preventing inconsistency for thematic development for the purpose of content analysis. The created themes provided a place to gather and store the relevant pieces of statement, defined as ‘references. Based on their similarity, ‘codes’ created from ‘references’ allowed themes to be combined, renamed, and deleted in the process of data analysis. At the data coding exercise, we checked the transcription for accuracy and read the data repeatedly to get a better understanding of the database.

The codes were verified and refined through colors, however, data coding selected and obtained data carefully to avoid repetition but ignored other data that do not accurately provide evidence for the theme.

Instrument 1. Interview with Former Students

The analysis of this instrument was divided into several stages, which were organized in a table, using the methodology of coding and categorization. First, we listened to the recording of the meeting, which had a duration from 30 minutes to 60 minutes for each participant, depending on the answers they provided and the information they wanted to deepen. Second, we listened to the recording again in order to write a summary focused on each of the participants and their opinions, as we can see in the Figure 4, it is the first column of the table from left to right called “RESUME”. We tried to write as many details as possible in order not to lose any important information. Note: Due to the amount of data collected, it was not possible to transcribe the interview, so a summary of the interviews was a good alternative.

Third, we listened to the recording again while we were reading the summary in order to reflect and analyze what was behind the answers they were giving, questions that arose along the interview, and other topics that we want to delve into in further instruments. There is an example of this as well in the second column of the table from left to right called “RESEARCHERS’ REFLECTION”. In this section, it was important to conduct a detailed review of the answers, taking into account the purpose of this instrument, thus we were able to gather all the information we wanted the participants to answer.

Then, the most relevant aspects in the participant’s answers were highlighted because they had key information related to the object of this research, as well as additional information that led us to ask us some questions, as we can see in the third column of the table called “Codification”. In this section, we included not only some questions that arose along the interview, but also topics that the participants mentioned more than one time, becoming into

codes. Those codes were highlighted in bright colors, in that way, we could recognize them within the document.

Finally, when we finished the analysis and codification of the four participants, we went back from the first to the last interview, looking for similarities in the codes found in each participant. At the end, those similar codes within the participants turned into the categories that emerged from the interviews, as we can see in the last column called “Categories”. Each similar code, highlighted in a specific color, preserved the same color in the category.

Figure 4.

Analysis of first interview

RESUME	RESEARCHER'S REFLECTION	CODIFICATION	CATEGORIES
Sara: Sara was born and lives in <u>Arauca</u>. She is 32 years old and works as a teacher in the township of <u>Arauquita</u>. She has been a rural teacher for eleven years at <u>Gaviotas del Caranal</u> that belongs to the <u>CEAR</u> de Panama (Rural Educational Centers of <u>Arauquita</u>) is a group of linked schools. After high school, she studied four semesters to graduate as a <u>normalist</u> teacher and for this experience she started in pedagogy. She was trained to teach different subjects of all grades. since her training she	The experience of being able to speak directly with the participant and have closer contact, knowing their thoughts, experiences and attitudes has been very nice. She is a woman who inspires a lot of tenderness and confidence. Her whole experience as a teacher has been constructed in the same institution, for almost 12 years. When Sara entered <u>DUAD</u>, she was a “<u>Normalista</u>” teacher, she studied this at school and also prepared for 4 complementary years. She basically studied the bachelor because she	Personality: tender, confident, humble, entrepreneur, courageous. Why has she been working for 12 years there? Is she very good? Is it a very good job? Does she have a good salary? Aren't there more English teachers in the institution? She wants to leave the comfort zone and looks for new horizons.	Likes for learning Peers' influence Distance education presented a good opportunity to learn. Distance education requires more responsibilities and more dedication, and develops different competences.

Instrument 2. Focus Group with Former Students

The analysis of this focus group was developed in six stages, and at the end, the information was organized in a chart that shows the codes and categories that arose from the information collected, as we can see in the Figure 5.

Figure 5.

Analysis of focus group

Participants	Sara	Isabel	Adrian	Pablo	Analysis	Codes	Categories
Questions							
How was the flexibility that offers the distance modality present in the learning process?	For her, the flexibility was in terms of location. Since she lives in a rural area, the distance education modality helped her to shorten distances and to have the opportunity to learn even though there was not a campus near her. She said that when the student is organized, they do not accumulate tasks. She took advantage of the organization of time she could have to submit the tasks even before the date.	People can study at their own pace, she could be a mother, a wife, she could work and study, and all at the same time. People doesn't need to follow a schedule, as they organize their time depending on their needs. However, people need to know how to auto-regulate themselves. She mentioned that people need to go beyond what they are learning, beyond what the teacher is teaching.	Flexibility about everything. He was able to work part-time since face-to-face tutorings took place only on Saturdays. Every person can develop things at their own pace.	Studying at distance allowed him to study while he was working, to spend time with his family. But also the distance modality helped him to grow both professionally and academically. People think that distance university is not as strict as the face-to-face modality. However, they give you dates to deliver the task, you manage to organize your time. The university demanded responsibility on the date you had to submit your tasks.	All the participants mentioned different aspects of what flexibility means for them: flexibility in terms of location or living in a far away place, flexibility in terms of the roles they can develop at the same time, and flexibility in terms of professional and personal growth. So, this means that the distance modality seeks to include people from all places, with several roles and occupations, just with the desire of getting a professional career. It also has a social impact because of the opportunities it can provide to people with different situations and disadvantages.	Distance education learns to be organized with the time. Learn auto-regulation skills. Responsibility.	Competences and cognitive abilities gained from studying and teaching with the distance modality. Lack of interaction between the participants. Lack of strategies to teach and learn in the distance modality.

Stage 1: Since there was too much information to analyze here, we decided to use an online program that helped us to transcript the audio of the recording. The tool used can be found at <https://chequeabot.chequeado.com/desgrabador/>.

Stage 2: After getting the transcribed text, we realized that it was disorganized and there were some mistakes in words and phrases that the program recognized wrongly. For that, we had to listen to the recording of the focus group in order to revise, correct the errors, and complete the information the tool left in the text. In that way, the transcription could be read easily as if it was a script. There is an example of how it could be seen after cleaning the text in the Figure 6.

Figure 6.

Excerpt from the transcription of the focus group.

Pablo: *bueno pues yo creería que una de las técnicas que yo siempre aplicaba para cualquier materia era hacer mapas conceptuales y qué más... yo siempre mantenía digamos notas adhesivas y todo lo posible para yo aprender no sólo inglés sino el tema. De hecho yo me acuerdo que, no sé si ustedes tuvieron también es el libro, a nosotros nos dieron un libro recién empezamos la carrera, era un libro que le decía a uno digamos qué estrategias usar para estudiar. Entonces le decía a uno hacer mapas conceptuales, y pues así fue, así es como yo lo he hecho.*

Sheryl: *Si, creo que esa materia era de metodologías de estudio, algo así, metodologías de estudio.*

Pablo: *Si, así es, muy útil muy útil me pareció el libro y por ejemplo yo también vi literatura, que también la tome y chevere, vimos cosas que se aprendían mucho y también para yo tomar los apuntes, porque creo que tocaba hacer un ensayo algo así al final, también hacía igual, yo ponía notas adhesivas y así era como yo hacía para para memorizarme todo eso.*

Stage 3: After the information was organized and easy to read, we created a chart in which each question was put in a column and the names of the participants were put in the rows. Then, the transcription was carefully read and the most relevant information the participants were providing was organized in the chart, as we can see in Image 2, under the pink columns from left to right. The idea of organizing the information in this way had the purpose of having a general perspective of their answers, without getting into specifics, but instead, organizing the key information they provided in each question.

Stage 4: Then, the answers we wrote in each row under the participants' names were read carefully again to make an analysis taking the key aspects related to each question and going beyond their words. The aim of the analysis was to interpret the connections between the answers they gave to each question and try to put into words what they were suggesting but did not say directly. This can be seen in the "Analysis" row, highlighted in green.

Stage 5: The next step we took was to highlight all the similar information they provided in each question and cluster them together into codes. We can see in the Image 2, that all the

similar information about flexibility was highlighted in blue and then turned into the code “Distance education teaches to be organized with the time”. This was developed in each question and highlighting all the relevant information about the same topic.

Stage 6: Finally, after getting all the highlighted codes, we grouped all the similar codes that were mentioned several times in different questions into categories, as we can see in the last column from left to right.

Instrument 3. Comparison of curricula between four EFL programs in different modalities and institutions with the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés at DUAD

To analyze the data collected from the EFL programs’ curriculum offered by the Universidad Distrital, Universidad Abierta y a Distancia (UNAD), Universidad La Gran Colombia, and EDUPOL, which was organized in the comparative chart mentioned before, we developed this process in two stages: summary and conclusions of the data collected, and a chart using the methodology of coding and categorization.

First, we took the time to review the information grouped in the comparative chart for each university and wrote a reflection of the key similarities and differences that those programs had in comparison with the LLEI at DUAD, taking into account aspects like the modality, the number of credits, the total number of subjects and subjects by semester, the presence of the English language component, the pedagogical component, and the research component, getting different results in each one. We finished this section with a conclusion and summary of the similarities and differences we found, based on the information available, and the implications that this might have in comparison with the EFL program at DUAD.

Then, to conclude, we revised the information and the curriculum of these programs again in order to create a chart with the similar codes found in each program compared to the LLEI at DUAD, and all the similar codes were organized into main categories as we can see in the Figure 7. In this case, since the similar codes were less than previous analyzed data, they were not classified with colors, just into topics.

Figure 7

Analysis of comparative chart between curriculums.

Universities curriculum	Codes	Categories
<u>DUAD - Universidad Distrital</u> At distance - Face to face Private - Public	• Number of semesters (10). • Number of subjects (55 <u>Distrital</u> -56 <u>DUAD</u>) • Research component (all the career) • Research project as graduation requirement • English component, from 6th semester, all subjects are in English. • Similar name.	Ten semesters per career. Pedagogical component, nature of bachelor program. English component is different Criteria to determine number of subjects Denomination in Bachelor Programs Each bachelor program has at least an English, a pedagogical and a research component, including some humanistic subjects.
<u>DUAD - UNAD</u> At distance - Virtual Private - Public	• Number of semesters (10). • 6 subjects per semester • Number of subjects (59 UNAD-56)	

Instrument 4. Interview with three professional teachers with experience in EFL Distance education programs and other modalities

To analyze this last instrument, we tried to synthesize the information collected using the methodology of coding and categorization. The first step was to listen carefully to the recording of the interviews and create a chart in which we took each teacher's responses to organize information. Then, we wrote a synthesis below each question about the most important information that teachers provided, with the purpose of maintaining important data they shared. Since the questions designed for this interview were specific and straight to the point, we managed to include a short analysis sentence in this same section, which is under the "Teacher" column.

After the information was organized question by question and teacher by teacher, a new column called "codification" was created with the purpose of annotating and highlighting similar data in the responses they provided they could be put together. In this stage, we considered it important to only mention information that was repeated two or more times. Next, all the codes that we found were revised carefully trying to make sense of the connection they had between them and join up general topics into categories, an example of this process of analysis and its stages can be seen in the Figure 8.

Figure 8

Analysis chart for teachers' interview

Teacher	Codification	Categorization
Teacher V Describe differences between EFL Teaching and learning at distance and at face-to face modalities. The population is different: (Distance modality) people with super low income, places where professional careers are not available, and people that have multiple roles in daily life. (Face to face) "I saw people that studied in the day and people that studied at night" people who studied in the day, could study all the time and people who studied at night, it was because they had to work. Believe in modality	Students from Distance Education are Different of Face to Face modality (multiple roles in daily life) People don't believe in the modality. Have they tried this modality?	Main category: Distance Education Modality in Colombia. EFL teaching and learning at DUAD- USTA Subcategory 1 Distance education presents an opportunity to learn to a diverse group of people. Subcategory 2 Perceptions about the modality - quien lo dijo? Belief in the modality is low due to lack of knowledge about it Subcategory 3 DUAD USTA There is little investment in the modality to get infrastructure, technology.

Categorization

Shkedi, (2005) affirms that the process of grouping together segments of data that seem to pertain to the same phenomenon is called coding, or, as we prefer to call it, categorization. Categorization is based on classification; it is done by breaking down the data to make meaning out of it. Thus, classification is a conceptual process. Classification consists of two elements: it is a process of fragmenting the data into separate bits and then of assigning these ‘bits’ to categories or classes which bring them together again, if in a novel way. When we rearrange the data according to our classifications, all the bits that ‘belong’ to a particular category are brought together. During this process, we begin to discern more clearly the criteria for allocating data to one category or another, and themes that characterize the data become apparent.

Figure 9

Bits of categories

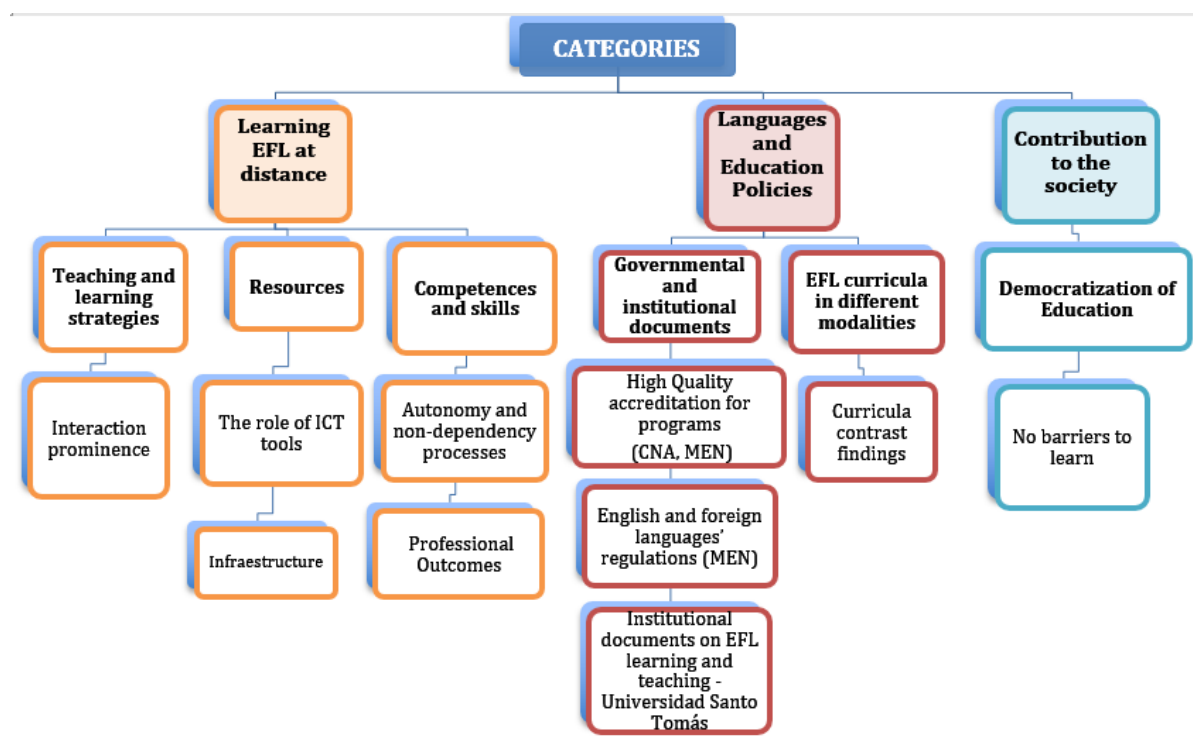
Teacher	Codification	Categorization	Findings
Teacher V Describe differences between EFL Teaching and learning at distance and at face-to-face modalities. The population is different: (Distance modality) people with super low income, places where professional careers are not available, and people that have multiple roles in daily life. (Face to face) "I saw people that studied in the day and people that studied at night" people who studied in the day, could study all the time and people who studied at night, it was because they had to work. Believe in modality	Process of fragmenting data Students from Distance Education are different of Face to Face modality (multiple roles in daily life) People don't believe in the modality. Have they tried this modality?	Main category: Distance Education Modality in Colombia. EFL teaching and learning at DUAD- USTA Subcategory 1 Distance education presents an opportunity to learn to a diverse group of people. Subcategory 2 Perceptions about the modality - quiet in digital Belief in the modality is low due to lack of knowledge about it Subcategory 3 DUAD USTA There is little investment in the modality to get infrastructure, technology	- People don't know the modality, they have heard about it. - Students and teachers must believe in this modality to learn and teach successfully. Conviction in the modality. - New proposals about online pedagogy. - Teacher's preparation, who is the teacher? What makes a good teacher? - People without experience make documentation about distance education. - The credits for a specific program depend entirely on the group in charge of the

Based on the data collection, the codification and the careful reflection, we reached the following categories. The three main categories were presented horizontally and were named

“Learning EFL at distance”, “Policies in EFL”, and “Social impact”. The first one was divided into three subcategories, which were named “Teaching and learning strategies”, “Resources”, and “Competences and skills”. The second one was divided into two subcategories named “Government and institutional documents in EFL teaching and learning” and “EFL curricula in different modalities”. The third category was divided into one subcategory named “Democratization Of Education”. This explanation was presented in Table 1.

Figure 10.

Categorization



Category 1. Learning EFL at distance

According to Schlosser & Simonson (2009), as cited in Guri-Rosenblit (2005), distance education is “institution-based, formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and

instructors.” (p. 1). Universidad Santo Tomás (2018) says that distance education can be defined as an educative modality that demands and implies a pedagogical paradigm contextualized in a new national and international setting, based on a new conception of teaching, learning, and getting to know the world, with an emphasis on an autonomous learning environment and the dynamic management of time, space, chronology, and learning capacity.

It emerges as a form of non-face-to-face or partial face-to-face education. Considering that one of the purposes of the LLEI consists in the consolidation of autonomous learning processes, it is important to promote the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools, which opens a door for interaction between the participants. These tools facilitate the communication between students-teachers, students-students, and teachers-students.

In this sense, studying EFL under the distance modality involves a group of students that are not able to take language instruction in face-to-face settings due to different reasons (financial, workload, and other responsibilities) so they do not lose the opportunity to get trained on the language (Altunay, 2019). However, studying at distance does not mean that students do not interact with their peers and teachers. On the contrary, the teachers take advantage of technological tools to implement strategies that expose students to authentic language so interaction can take place in synchronous and asynchronous activities. In addition, distance education provides students with flexibility of time and place to comply with the academic responsibilities.

Approaches, methodology and didactics

Universidad Santo Tomás (2018) points out that digital mediation brings out pedagogical mediation through technological resources that strengthen and potentialize interactive scenes

between the participants of the educational context, which allow a relationship between the learning and teaching processes, the students and the teachers, and the resources that support the training processes within the bachelor program. Learning a language at distance includes challenges for both the teachers and the students to consider the implementation of strategies that foster interaction, the strengthening of the digital resources access and computer mediated interactions.

For that, the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés has implemented effective and efficient methodological strategies that seek to overcome geographic barriers that students who decide to choose this modality face. In that sense, the resources implemented in the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés promote computer-mediated interaction leading to development of communication and learning strategies, which also conduct the students to determine their interaction frequency, especially the linguistic features of a foreign language when they communicate.

Subcategory 1. Teaching and learning strategies

One of the most crucial aspects of studying at distance is to encourage the learning and teaching process to achieve academic objectives, especially when a foreign language is learned through this modality. For that reason, Universidad Santo Tomás (n.d) implements communicative strategies to maintain continuous and adequate contact with the student. Permanent interaction is a relevant factor when learning a foreign language because the use of a language is an intrapersonal and interpersonal or social process, which implies an interactive process. (White, 2003).

In addition, the interaction component in the online learning is complemented and justified in the conceptual framework presented by Brown (2001), as cited in Universidad Santo Tomás (n.d.) which exposes that:

Las teorías de la competencia comunicativa enfatizan en la importancia de la interacción humana, en tanto que los seres humanos usan el lenguaje en diferentes contextos para “negociar” significados, o dicho de modo simple, para tener una idea de la dimensión mental de una persona y viceversa. [Theories of communicative competence emphasize the importance of human interaction, as human beings use language in different contexts to "negotiate" meanings, or simply put, to get an idea of the mental dimension of a person and vice versa] (p. 165).

In this way, the learning of the EFL implies a social dimension, however, in the educational context, it is a system with an open and at distance methodology. It is not only about interaction in relation to the social nature of the language, but also about the concept of interactive competence.

Interaction prominence.

In general terms, people perceive distance education as a lack of interaction and social presence; for that, aspirant students prefer to study under a face-to-face modality. However, distance education has been promoted as being more convenient and cost effective than traditional education and contexts, due to it can provide equal educational benefits for students to continue their learning process despite their geographical, economic, and time conditions.

Distance education can be divided into two systems: asynchronous and synchronous. Asynchronous is defined as “... the type of distance education where information is constructed

prior and stocked and later on students reach the amount of information when they need” (Karen, 2004; Simonson & Schlosser, 2009, as cited in Alhih, Ossiannilsson, & Berigel, 2017, p. 2735).

An example of this is the study of texts, taking courses on the internet, watching video-recorded courses, and participating in online forums and discussion groups. On the other hand, Synchronous distance education “is the type of education where teachers and students correspond in exchange, and information is delivered to target audience immediately when it is constructed (Simonson & Schlosser, 2009, in Alhih et al, 2017, p. 2735). Some examples of this system are meetings, conferences, video-chats in which there is immediate feedback, discussions, and question-answer activities, like what happens in traditional education environments.

Based on that information, it is imperative to highlight the role of interaction in distance education, being interactivity crucial for the development of the teaching and learning processes at distance. According to several studies, there are three types of interaction: student-teacher, student-student, and student-content.

- **Student-student interaction:** It takes place between individual students or among students working in small groups. Generally, this interaction is almost absent in distance education, considering that some students do not get to know their counterparts. This type of interaction can happen synchronously and asynchronously, but also in other technological resources as social media.
- **Student-teacher interaction:** It is focused on the dialogue between students and the teacher. According to Moore (1989), as cited in Abrami, Bernard, Bures, Borokhovski, & Tamim (2011), during this type of interaction, the teacher aims to maintain the students’

interest in the learning topic, to motivate the student to take part of the learning process, including strategies of self-direction and self-motivation. This can happen through videoconferencing, chats (synchronously) and through emails and forums (asynchronously).

- **Student-content interaction:** It refers to the relationship between students and the subject under study in order to build knowledge, relate it to real life situations, and apply it to resolution of problems. (Moore, 1989, as cited in Abrami et al, (2011). This type of interaction includes reading academic books and articles, the use of text guides, interacting with multimedia, searching information, and conducting projects, among others.

From the data collected, the participants mentioned that the lack of interaction can be harmful for the modality: the students' motivation can be affected when they do not have their peers or teachers support; the overall academic outcomes can be affected due to there is not an space for resolving doubts or questions; even when students are taking virtual classes, there are socialization spaces that could take place. Some explicit examples the participants provided are:

Focus group. Adrián. October 7, 2020: “el tema del contacto, porque pues obviamente tu generalmente con tus profesores tienes la posibilidad de hablar en inglés y hacerlo de pronto dentro del aula, pero si tú solamente los ves cada 8 días, pues no tienes la misma posibilidad que alguien que estudia presencial que los ve todos los días. ...sé que la motivación es interna, pero a veces las personas alrededor tuyo también te pueden ayudar a motivarte.”

Interview 2. Teacher C. May 1st, 2021: “El contacto persona-persona es definitivo... la vida en sociedad es contacto. Si las circunstancias lo requieren, uno tiene que agudizar los sentidos... Mejorar las metodologías, explorar la didáctica de la enseñanza para que los estudiantes no solamente aprendan la lengua, sino que se entusiasmen”.

To conclude this, it is crucial to mention that these types of interaction are important for the students' learning process, motivation, and success in the subject/course. However, the strategies of interaction must be better designed to facilitate more targeted, intentional, and engaging educational exchanges.

Subcategory 2. Resources

Distance modality emerges as a non-face-to-face or partially face-to-face education, it means that the meetings between students and teachers (usually named advisers or tutors) are sporadic or scheduled every fifteen or thirty days. Generally, the communication is given by phone and email, the contents of the subjects are delivered throughout an educational platform. Face-to-face meetings between students and teachers are scheduled with the unique purpose of clarifying doubts and concerns about the contents.

On the other hand, the methodology of this modality is put into practice through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Some aspects that differentiate the distance modality from other modalities is that the first one has conferences, online seminars, interactions between the tutors and the students through chats and shared boards, with synchronous and asynchronous tools that integrate an educative platform and make part of the “ambientes infovirtuales” (Guarin, 2005) as cited in Universidad Santo Tomás (2018).

The role of ICT tools.

Over the past years, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been taking more importance in education, especially in the distance education modality. Hismanoglu (2012) in his study about teachers' perceptions of ICT, mentioned that these tools provide learners opportunities in any field and the integration of them can complement and modify the pedagogical practice in the classroom. Ward and Parr (2010), as cited in Hismanoglu (2012) mentioned that "the impact of ICT is strongest when used in a particular content area and further supported by use across the curriculum." (p. 185). This means that the use of ICT must be improved by the teachers and utilized by students to be effective.

In addition, Lafford, and Lafford (1997) as cited in Hismanoglu (2012), mentioned that teaching a foreign language is a field that is known because of its use of technology to facilitate the language learning process. Also,

...language teachers have identified various uses of ICT in the language class, including the use of the web as a tool for obtaining information, project writing, communication among a group of students through e-mail and online chatroom, web-based course programs and publishing project work. (Hismanoglu, 2012, p.186).

ICT has been used more in distance education, becoming a fundamental part of its function, to the point that distance education depends on the ICT use. It is important to clarify that this dependency is related to the ICT tools being the main resource of communication, but not related to the teaching and learning process of the modality.

Within the Facultad de Educación of Universidad Santo Tomás, the educational processes are strengthened through the ICT tools, the knowledge, and the learning. Moreover, the

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés bachelor program, promotes the integration and use of the ICT, creating a permanent interaction system with the students in different virtual learning environments. In accordance with the *Modelo Pedagógico* of the USTA, the need and pedagogical function are proposed to reflect into new educational scenarios in response to the digital changes, the virtual culture, and the new ICT to stake out the pedagogical processes and create new bold interaction and communication proposals within teachers, students, and knowledge. (Díaz O.P and Rodríguez, 2010).

From the instruments applied, the importance of ICT tools was highlighted by the participants, arguing that distance students could be trained in these technologies, however, they must not be the center of learning. Examples:

Interview 1. Adrián. May 6, 2020: “Nosotros, las personas que estudiamos a distancia, adquirimos una capacidad ... diferente, que puede ser una ventaja en muchas ocasiones con respecto a las personas que estudian de manera presencial, porque nosotros dependemos de la tecnología, aprendimos a usarla y la usamos diariamente. Todo ese tipo de herramientas tecnológicas que existen yo ya las conocía. Nosotros tenemos un bonus, una ventaja...”.

Interview 2. Teacher M. April 22, 2021: “(*ICT tools*) ... son supremamente importantes para la modalidad a distancia, hoy en día y en estos tiempos... son herramientas. Las TIC (*ICT*) son mediaciones trascendentales con un potencial gigante, pero hay que considerar las realidades.”

Infrastructure.

One of the most important factors in distance education is related to its infrastructure and the data collected from the participants support this. About this, Alsabawy, Cater-Steel, and Soar (2013), as cited in Moore and Fodrey (2018), explained that “IT infrastructure services are a critical factor which affects the institutions' activities as it relates to distance education.” (p. 431). The authors present four components that, combined, create a technology infrastructure, which can support the distance education delivery: systems, objectives, evaluation, and personnel.

- Systems: This component is divided into two aspects, one is related to the format or method the teacher uses to create the instructional content and the other, to the platform used to deliver that content.
- Objectives: “It is critical to establish clear learning objectives and to align these with the technology tools that are selected and implemented.” (Moore and Fodrey, 2018, p. 92). In this sense, with clear objectives, it is better to determine what is being achieved and what is needed to be reinforced.
- Evaluation: This component takes into consideration two types, the initial evaluation of the tool that is going to be utilized and the continuous evaluation which should take place after the implementation of the tools.
- Personnel: This section is an important requirement of technological infrastructure, since the hiring of an instructional designer is needed to integrate technology into the tools and also, align this technology with the learning objectives.

Some teachers interviewed mentioned that, even though distance education has been improving over the years, its infrastructure needs to be improved, so the mediations applied in the modality are effective. Some examples of what they mentioned are:

Interview 2. Teacher V. April 22, 2021: “Si hablamos de la modalidad a distancia... un reto es la infraestructura... (*Infrastructure*) abarca todo, capacidad tecnológica, capacidad física, contratación, idoneidad, volumen de gente contratada, distribución, logística... tiene que estar muy sólida.”.

Subcategory 3. Competences and skills

A common topic that arose in almost three of the instruments applied refers to competences and abilities that both students and teachers obtain from teaching and learning at distance. For its nature, Distance Education students need to use different skills and competences which are necessary to achieve their goals with a good performance during the program.

Regarding this, Akgun (2015) affirms:

ODL (Open Distance Learning) is a learning process that requires learners to employ various skills and competencies because ODL is a type of learning in which learners and teachers are separated from each other both spatially and in terms of time depending on the type of distance learning program. (p. 174).

Autonomy and non-dependency processes.

Something our participants mentioned a lot was that to be successful in distance education, it is necessary to be organized with time, to manage different tasks at the same time, to be autonomous, among others.

All the competences and skills are directly related to the metacognitive group of competences and skills. According to Akgun (2015), these competences and skills are not related to activities to develop, but instead, skills and competences within the students that help them become autonomous learners. Being able to analyze one's own competencies; planning, monitoring, and reflecting on the learning processes can be identified as the main categories of the metacognitive skills. Learner autonomy is a requirement of distance learning and autonomy “a process not a product” (Thanasoulas, 2000 in Akgun, 2015, p. 178).

Autonomy.

Some examples of these metacognitive skills and competences as cited in Akgun (2015) are: self-discipline, effective time-management, being an independent learner, self-direction, and self-confidence. In almost three of the instruments applied, the participants mentioned that autonomy, time organization, discipline, commitment, study habits, are some of the skills required to successfully comply with the tasks within distance education. Examples:

Interview 1. Isabel. May 6, 2020: “Yo pienso que para la educación a distancia se necesitan unas características especiales, no todo mundo puede estudiar y aprender a distancia. Se necesita perseverancia, disciplina, ser autodidacta, organización. Son muchas cualidades que una persona debe tener para poder aprender a distancia...
(*Distance education*) Incluso a veces se necesita más responsabilidad, mucho más autocontrol, mucha más disciplina porque eres tú mismo el que está manejando, tu tiempo, tu aprendizaje, tu ética también...”.

Interview 1. Adrián. May 6, 2020: “*Distance education* exige de parte del alumno un mayor grado de autonomía especialmente, de dedicación y de esfuerzo propios. Hay

personas que dependen un poco de la motivación externa... pero si tú estudias a distancia, eso no va a existir. Otra cosa que también tiene que ocurrir es que los estudiantes tienen que ser organizados... tienes que organizar tu tiempo para leer, hacer los trabajos y entregarlos.”.

Focus group. Sara. Date: October 7, 2020: “Los pros en cuanto a la educación a distancia... pues yo considero que ... se refleja mucho la autonomía, la organización, la disciplina, el ritmo de estudio ... que maneje el estudiante”.

Interview 2. Teacher M. April 22, 2021: “Esta modalidad (*specifically at distance and online*) requiere unas habilidades particulares y unas actitudes particulares...si crees que tienes las cualidades, la disciplina, la autorregulación, la autonomía como aprendiz como estudiante (*to accomplish with*) el rigor que la modalidad conlleva, seguramente tendrás un gran éxito.”

Non-dependency.

A transversal item that emerged from the autonomy topic was the co-dependency or the need of a teacher controlling the teaching and learning process. García and Muñoz (2007), as cited in Benavides and Guerrero (2013), pointed out that the dependency measures the excessive need for approval and advice from the student. It prevents the students develop their abilities to solve problems related to the subject and blocks their self-management skills, which can negatively influence their academic performance.

About this, the participants mentioned that, under the face-to-face modality, students tend to depend on what the teacher says, the activities provided by the teacher, the resources that the teacher provides, and so on. However, in distance education, that dependency on the teacher does

not exist or it is almost nonexistent, since students oversee their learning process, while the teacher only plays a role of guiding, tutoring, and clarifying any doubt that might arise.

Some examples of this non-dependency in distance education, are:

Interview 1. Pablo. May 6, 2020: “La educación a distancia brinda mucha flexibilidad en tiempo y aparte de eso, los temas que uno absorbe, los absorbe ya por iniciativa de uno mismo. En cambio, en la parte presencial, uno tiene al profesor, el profesor es el que da la explicación y está muy centralizado el tema del aprendizaje... todo lo que diga el profesor. Y en la virtualidad yo encontré que eso no era así.”

Focus group. Adrián. October 7, 2020: “Tú no requieres todo el tiempo del profesor para hacer ciertas cuestiones y porque si desarrolla en ti como docente ciertas capacidades como por ejemplo el tema de ser un poco más autónomo y hasta cierto modo autosuficiente eso te enseña precisamente a no sé cómo decirlo suena muy coloquial pero sí cómo hacer un poco más guerrero porque en muchas ocasiones como que tú ves al profesor todo el tiempo y dependes absolutamente de todo lo que él diga cuando estás en una educación presencial pero en una educación a distancia no, tú tienes que ser más autónomo y buscar un montón de recursos por ti mismo para aprender.”

Professional outcomes.

Another common topic that arose from the data collected was participants mentioning that they feel qualified to perform their current job without distinction from their peers who studied in the face-to-face modality. Regarding the outcomes from students from both modalities, Phipps and Merisotis (1999) as cited in Shachar & Neumann (2003) reported that “the learning

outcomes of students using technology at a distance are similar to the learning outcomes of students who participate in conventional classroom instruction.” (p. 3).

Some results of a meta-analytic study carried out by Shachar & Neumann (2003) pointed out that distance education was indeed an effective teaching modality. “This analysis demonstrates that students engaged in DE (Distance Education) academically outperform their F2F (Face to Face) counterparts.” (p. 13).

Some examples that the participants provided were:

Interview 1. Adrián. May 6, 2020: “La educación a distancia para mí y para mi personalidad fue muy buena. Siento que si adquirí los conocimientos que necesitaba y de hecho, ahora revisándolo con muchos de mis compañeros, algunos colombianos, que estudiaron en universidades públicas y privadas, de forma presencial... y puedo establecer una conversación con ellos perfectamente, sobre temas pedagógicos o una conversación en inglés y es exactamente lo mismo. Entonces siento que al final, como que el producto termina siendo el mismo, aunque las dificultades y desafíos para cada metodología sean diferentes.”

Interview 1. Pablo. May 6, 2020: “De lo que aprendí me sirvió realmente para aplicarlo en una situación real y pues esa es la importancia de haber estudiado ¿no? de haber estado en la Santo Tomás. De haber aprendido todos esos contenidos que uno aprendió de forma virtual y es curioso ver que por ejemplo mis compañeros de trabajo la mayoría de graduó de presencial, de hecho, yo creo que soy el único que estudió virtual entonces uno se siente como orgulloso porque uno dice como: Yo resulté acá. Como te digo a mi me han tenido en cuenta como para cargos importantes y haber estudiado virtual digamos

unos se siente orgulloso, uno dice lo logre, fue duro, algo de autogestión, lo logré, soy un buen profesional, por lo visto...en el trabajo uno realmente aplica lo que uno aprendió no es que se aprendí eso porque si y hay una concordancia con la teoría que vimos y lo que hicimos allí, de hecho en el trabajo hacemos muchos debates como ¿que decía Brown?, lo que decía Jeremy Harmer, siempre se hacen esos debates y si todo eso es verdad.”.

Category 2. Policies in EFL

Based on the information the participants provided after applying the interviews and the focus group, it was needed to consult official and governmental documents in order to determine the quality of a program under the distance modality. Also, after consulting curricula from different universities with similar EFL bachelor programs, the researchers found out that there were some differences in key aspects such as the number of credits assigned per subject, the intensity of some components (pedagogical, research, foreign language and humanistic), among others.

For that reason, it was important to consult what are the requirements for a bachelor program to get certified under quality standards and to ensure its correct operation. The consultation was conducted through three perspectives: from the government’s guidelines, from foreign and English language standards, and from the Universidad Santo Tomás’ institutional policies.

Subcategory 1. Governmental and institutional documents

This category includes a review of official, governmental, and institutional documents with the purpose of validating and knowing about how EFL distance education programs work, which are the principles, rules, and laws that must be followed so that the programs work

correctly and under quality standards regardless of whether they are distance, virtual, face-to-face, dual, and among other modalities.

In the Case Study, documents and artifacts are part of the research setting. These are most typically a natural part of the research setting and do not intrude upon or alter the setting in the ways that the presence of the investigator might exist when conducting interviews or observations. Document is often used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study (including visual images), according to Merriam & Tisdell (2015).

In this research, the authors searched, compiled, revised, and studied documents that had a close relationship with EFL teaching and learning, and the rules that regulate both governmental and private universities. The purpose of that revision was to inquire if there was any difference in the regulation in front of distance, virtual or face-to-face modality, as well as review the national regulation for the teaching and learning of foreign languages, bilingual education, and the teaching of English in Colombia. The researchers revised documents in a range of five years from 2017 to 2021.

High quality accreditation for programs- (CNA, MEN).

Figure 11.

Governmental document



It is important to mention that to verify and ensure quality conditions in the language academic programs at universities in Colombia (face to face or distance education), it is necessary to obtain a qualified registry (Registro Calificado). This is an official document issued by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) in which the aim is to qualify conditions of the program and to offer a certification to the institutions that are certified. This regulation was launched on April 25, 2008, through the “Ley 1188”, which mentions the following:

“Compete al Ministerio de Educación Nacional otorgar el registro calificado mediante acto administrativo debidamente motivado en el que se ordenará la respectiva incorporación en el Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior (SNIES) y la asignación del código correspondiente.” (Art.1, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, n.d) [It is the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education to grant the qualified registration by means of a duly motivated administrative act in which the respective incorporation in the National System of Information of Higher Education, SNIES, and the assignment of the corresponding code will be ordered]. Text translated by the researchers.

Resolución 18583 de 2017 - Ministerio de Educación Nacional.

This document establishes the specific characteristics of quality for academic undergraduate bachelor programs to obtain, renew, and modify the qualified registry (Registro calificado). These characteristics must be presented in front of the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) in order to obtain this recognition. In addition, this document rules the procedure and general aspects for the mandatory qualified registry of higher education institutions, legally accepted by the MEN and those authorized by the law to offer programs of higher education.

Denominations of the bachelor Programs

The first requirement and characteristic to obtain a qualified registry is the “Denomination”, which was defined in articles 23 and 31 from the “Ley 115 de 1994”. Bachelor programs must obey one of the following denominations, which correspond to the area of humanities and languages:

Figure 12.

Denomination for bachelor programs

Licenciatura en Humanidades y Lengua Castellana	Humanidades, Lengua Castellana e Idiomas Extranjeros
Licenciatura en Literatura y Lengua Castellana	
Licenciatura en Literatura	
Licenciatura en Español y Filología	
Licenciatura en Español e Inglés	
Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas	
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras	
Licenciatura en Español y Lenguas Extranjeras	
Licenciatura en Filología e Idiomas	
Licenciatura en Bilingüismo	

Note. Retrieved from *Resolución 18583* [screenshot] by Ministerio de Educación, 2017.

Based on the previous image, the name must be defined according to the nature of the program, the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2017) stipulates in article 2 that:

Tratándose de Licenciaturas en Lenguas Extranjeras, Bilingüismo y Lenguas Modernas, las instituciones de educación superior deberán agregar como énfasis a la denominación al menos un idioma de especialidad. En todo caso, las instituciones podrán estructurar el currículo de estas Licenciaturas de forma que cada estudiante pueda escoger idiomas adicionales a los de la especialidad, de acuerdo con los requisitos enunciados en el numeral 2 del presente artículo”. [In the case of Degrees in Foreign Languages, Bilingualism and Modern Languages, the Higher education institutions must add as an

emphasis to the denomination at least one specialty language. In any case, the institutions may structure the curriculum of these Bachelor's degrees so that each student can choose additional languages to those of this specialty, in accordance with the requirements set forth in numeral 2 of this article.].

Additionally, the institution that offers the program must have an explicit curricular design where the theoretical, didactic, and pedagogical foundations are clear so that they offer quality in terms of the training process as well as in the professional profile of the aspiring teacher. In the same way, the curriculum must ensure a disciplined and sticky knowledge that allows training in teaching-learning processes, training in research, appropriation and use of new technologies, capacity for conflict resolution, and social projection in their environment, interculturality, among others. All the above must be supported with due supervision for the evaluation and criticism of the learning that is promoted, this is stipulated in the paragraph 3.2 of the article. (Ministerio de Educación, 2017).

Credits per subject

Regarding the credits and duration of the program, each institution is free to define these components as mentioned by Ministerio de Educación in “Resolución 18583 de 2017”:

“...Los programas de Licenciatura se organizarán por créditos; la definición de la duración en tiempo y el número de créditos será determinado autónomamente por las instituciones de educación superior, de acuerdo con las características propias del programa y sus rasgos distintivos”. [... The Bachelor's programs will be organized by credits; The definition of the duration in time and the number of credits will be

determined autonomously by the higher education institutions, in accordance with the characteristics of the program and its distinctive features.]

This means that all universities have the autonomy to define the number of credits in their programs, in the case of the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés at Santo Tomás university, the program has 157 credits that are distributed in 10 semesters.

Pedagogical practice component

About pedagogical practice, the “Decreto 18583 de 2008” declares that bachelor programs can be offered in face-to-face methodology if they meet requirements such as establishing face-to-face spaces that allow students to carry out pedagogical practices with a minimum of 40 face-to-face credits, that the program has technological, organizational means and sticky mediations necessary to carry out a process of development and monitoring in different learning environments, carry out different strategies taking into account the modality and nature of the program, favoring the acquisition, development and improvement of skills in training, teaching, evaluation, and research. Regarding distance programs, the decree indicates the following:

Para los programas a distancia, contar con las condiciones de infraestructura física, tecnológica y de recursos humanos para el acompañamiento de las prácticas pedagógicas de aula. [For distance programs, they must have the conditions of physical, technological, and human resources infrastructure for the accompaniment of classroom pedagogical practices.]

Bachelor programs must have educational means for professional development as teachers in their general, specific, pedagogical, and didactic components. Bachelor degree

programs that adopt virtual components to their methodology, must prove the existence of virtual learning environments according to the pedagogical model, that allow motorization and guarantee correct training. On the other hand, the university or program must have digital resources according to the discipline and its corresponding didactic. The techno-pedagogical resource strategies and courses for the permanent development of the teaching-learning process and didactic material on the platform in accordance with the pedagogical model of the program are also important.

Specific quality characteristics for bachelor programs under distance modality

The article 3 indicates the quality characteristics that all distance degree programs must demonstrate to obtain, renew or modify the qualified registry. It contains the detailed requirements of the following items: infrastructure, information systems, virtual campus, fundings, teachers, institutional policies of information technology and information on.

Table 1.

Specific characteristics' bachelor programs at distance must comply

Infrastructure	▪ Technological infrastructure of hardware, software, and connectivity. ▪ The availability of virtual classroom platforms; strategies for monitoring, auditing, and verification of their operation. ▪ Applications for the administration of academic, administrative, and online support training processes. ▪ Communication, interaction, evaluation, and monitoring tools. ▪ Access to libraries and digital databases; information security strategies and devices and the institutional network, and a technology renewal and updating policy. ▪ Guarantee the quality, maintenance and updating of networks and equipment. ▪ The technological infrastructure must be in accordance with the dynamics of the teaching-learning processes and be compatible with the academic, financial, and administrative processes.
-----------------------	---

Information Systems	▪ Information systems assurance at all levels. ▪ Allow the administration of information on admissions and registration, financing, well-being, virtual classroom platforms, institutional portals, evaluation systems, online support, access to library and databases, and have strategies, processes and devices
Virtual Campus	▪ Website that includes access to resources, learning content and its different services and virtual classrooms. ▪ Use updated resources available on the net for the design and development of learning activities.
Financing	▪ Guarantee financial resources for updating and purchasing technological infrastructure.
Teachers	▪ Qualified teaching staff for distance training. ▪ Present a teacher training and updating plan, according to the proposed pedagogical model. ▪ Accredite the suitability and qualification of teachers for monitoring and tutorial support, content design, content production, use of ICT, evaluation, and interaction.
Institutional Policies of Information Technologies (IT).	▪ Must have policies for IT management, access to IT services, identity management, storage and backup, service model, technological renewal, and software renewal.
Information on technological requirements.	▪ Teachers and students must be informed about the technological requirements necessary for the development of teaching and learning processes in virtual spaces.

Note. Adapted from *Resolución 18583* [screenshot] by Ministerio de Educación, 2017.

Decreto 1330 de 2019 - Ministerio de Educación Nacional.

Sustituye el Capítulo 2 y se suprime el Capítulo 7 del Título 3 de la Parte 5 del Libro 2 del Decreto 1075 de 2015 -Único Reglamentario del Sector Educación, respecto al Registro Calificado de Programas Académicos de Educación Superior.

Ley 1188 de 2008, the same law provides conditions and criteria for renewal of this qualified registration and granting a high qualified accreditation: It is valid to clarify that, institutions have the option to opt to receive this qualified registry and it is sufficient for its operation.

Resolución 15224 de 2020 - Ministerio de Educación Nacional.

It indicates that, in accordance to articles 1 and 2 from “Ley 118 de 2008”, the qualified registry is the required instrument to have the ability to offer and develop academic higher education programs, and assigns to the MEN the authority to grant this recognition, based on the fulfillment of the institutional quality conditions by the higher education institutions and those legally authorized to offer this public service. (Última actualización: 5 de julio de 2021 - Diario Oficial (51715) - junio 21 de 2021):

English and foreign languages’ regulations (MEN).

Figure 13.

Languages regulations in Colombia



Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo - MEN (2018-2022).

This program was designed by the Ministerio de Educación within the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo*, and its objective is:

“Fortalecer la enseñanza y aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras en la Educación Preescolar, Básica, y Media con el fin de garantizar la formación integral, el desarrollo de competencias de ciudadanos globales y del siglo XXI y fomentar la generación de oportunidades culturales, académicas, sociales y profesionales según las necesidades de las Instituciones Educativas y Regiones.” [Strengthen the teaching and learning of foreign languages in Preschool, Basic, and Middle Education in order to guarantee comprehensive training, the development of competencies of global citizens and the 21st century and promote the generation of cultural, academic, social and professionals according to the needs of the Educational Institutions and Regions.] (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, n.d).

From 2018 to 2022, the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (n.d.) establishes that the importance of learning foreign languages is that they are perceived as vehicles of communication, interaction, generation of opportunities, and development for children, teenagers, and young people in the education system, as well as the communities and regions. For that reason, they consider that the learning of foreign languages must be linked to their integral formation. All the methods and learning routes implemented in the classroom should guarantee the development of a communicative competence, including speaking and writing skills that allow them to communicate in interactive, common, and simple contexts.

This program wants to highlight the recognition that Colombia has gained for having a cultural and linguistic richness, being a multilingual and multicultural country that recognizes its native languages, while an international relationship is being built through foreign languages. The vision does not stop with the English language, as the MEN wants to include more languages with a functional multilingualism approach.

Programa Nacional de Fortalecimiento del Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras - MEN (2018-2022).

This program was designed by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) within the Plan de Desarrollo Nacional, which is planned from 2018 to 2022. To achieve the goals proposed, there are four strategic components:

- **Fortalecimiento de las prácticas pedagógicas (Strengthening pedagogical practices).**
The objective of this strategy is to work with innovative teachers and want to transform the learning of foreign languages. This line includes two projects named “Inspiring Teachers” and “School to School”.
- **Generación de ambientes de aprendizaje innovadores (Generation of innovative learning environments).** This line seeks to develop strategies that motivate the use of the English language as a communication vehicle, cultural exchange, and tool for the integral formation of the students. This line integrates two projects named “Connecting Cultures” and “Talk Tell Post!”.
- **Contenidos y herramientas para la enseñanza y aprendizaje (Contents and tools for teaching and learning).** This line includes different stages focused on consolidating lesson plans designed by teachers, the design of strategies to learn English and familiarize

students with standardized tests, the design and application of an English test for all grades, the adjustment and adaptation of resources to teach English, and to adjust and amplify the suggested curriculum of English in multilingual contexts.

- **Ecosistemas de bilingüismo (Bilingualism ecosystems).** This line aims to generate intersectoral articulation within *Secretarías de Educación*, the productive sector, *Cámaras de Comercio*, non-governmental institutions, universities, among others, to define linguistic policies and regional action plans that guarantee the generation of opportunities for children, teenagers, and young people for their life projects, and the development of the economic sectors, tourism, technology, and the fourth industrial revolution.

Programa Nacional de inglés - MEN (2015 - 2025).

In response to the challenge of competitiveness and globalization, and with the purpose of improving the educational quality through the development of English competences, the president of Colombia at that time, Juan Manuel Santos and the education minister at that time, Maria Fernanda Campo, presented the “Programa Nacional de Inglés”, which will take place from 2015 to 2025. It is a long-term strategy that aims the students to use the English language as a tool to communicate with the world and improve their job opportunities.

This program was presented under the pseudonym “Colombia Very Well!”, which provides continuity to the Ley de Bilingüismo, (Ley 1651 de 2013). This program is focalized on three components or approaches:

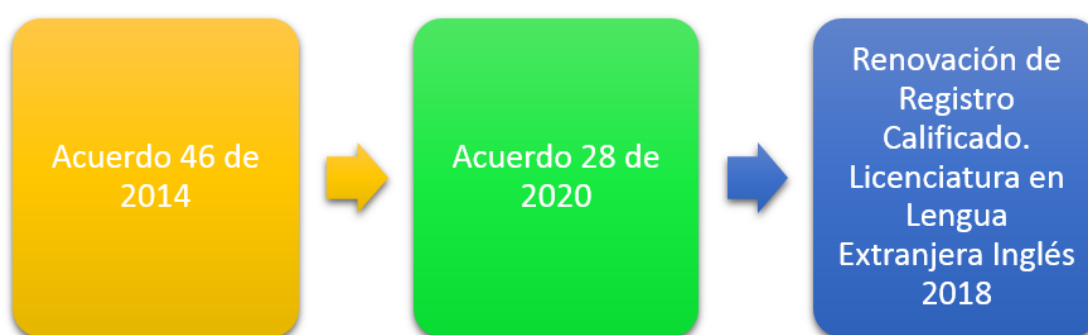
- Estrategias de formación docente y material pedagógico para educación básica y media (Teacher training strategies and pedagogical material for basic and middle education).

- Calidad, acompañamiento y financiación para la educación superior (Quality, support and financing for higher education).
- Articulación con el sector productivo (Articulation with the productive sector).

Institutional documents on EFL learning and teaching - Universidad Santo Tomás.

Figure 14.

Institutional documents about distance education



Previously, we have spoken about different decrees, laws, and resolutions stipulated by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) that correspond to minimum quality requirements for its operation and subsequent accreditation in Bachelor programs, and regulations and requirements related to teaching a foreign language and English specifically. Based on those governmental documents, Santo Tomas University proposes its own guidelines to responsibly comply with the requirements for granting and renewing high-quality accreditation in its programs and institutionally.

Acuerdo 28 de 2020. Política y lineamientos para la Formación en Lenguas

Extranjeras de la Universidad Santo Tomás a nivel multicampus.

In order to conceptualize the learning process of a foreign language, the Universidad Santo Tomás (2020) mentions that this procedure “...se alinea y configura con las diferentes

Funciones Sustantivas a saber: Docencia, Investigación y Responsabilidad Social Universitaria, así como con los procesos de Internacionalización, Desarrollo Integral Estudiantil y Aseguramiento de la Calidad.” [is aligned and configured with the different Substantive Functions, namely: Teaching, Research and University Social Responsibility, as well as with the processes of Internationalization, Comprehensive Student Development and Quality Assurance] (p. 11). For that reason, the foreign languages learning, and teaching processes are focused on: the development of communication competences; fostering multicultural contexts research; the assurance of quality processes according to national and international standards and guidelines, among others.

The mission of the foreign languages teaching and learning process at the Universidad Santo Tomás is based on the acquisition and formation of communicative and intercultural competences in order to contribute to the development of the integral formation of the students. Additionally, this process is aligned with the requirements of a globalized and multicultural world.

Acuerdo 46 de 2014. Reforma de las políticas de adquisición de competencia comunicativa en lengua extranjera en todas las sedes y seccionales de la USTA.

This document was approved with the purpose of upgrading the politics of the foreign language communicative competences acquisition in all the campuses of the USTA. It is intended for students of undergraduate and postgraduate programs of face-to-face and distance modalities, as well as to teachers and administrative staff.

For its elaboration, the following documents were revised: Acuerdo 5 de 2004; Acuerdo 8 de 2006; and Plan Nacional de Inglés (2005-2015). After these documents were analyzed, it was

necessary to update the curricular policy of training in a foreign language, taking the objectives of the university and the changing dynamics required to accredit a foreign language. (USTA, 2014, p. 1).

This document establishes that the training in a foreign language is institutional and mandatory, covered by the semester enrollment, and it is a requirement to get graduated. In the case of undergraduate students, they need to comply with the minimum English level of B1.2, according to the CEFR. Nevertheless, by 2025, they need to certificate a minimum English level of B2.

Renovación de Registro Calificado. Licenciatura en Lengua Extranjera Inglés (2018).

The Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés program at DUAD - Universidad Santo Tomás (LLEI) started providing service in 2007. Currently, it has more than 14 years of activity and offers service in 13 cities of Colombia. This program obtained its last qualified registration under the code 2270 on March 8, 2019, which is valid for seven years regardless of the level of training in accordance with “Decreto 1295” of 2010. However, the information that is going to be presented was taken from the previous document, since the most updated information is currently confidential and unavailable.

According to the information required by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), especially in the Resolución 18583 de 2017, this bachelor program specifies the following components that all programs need to comply with in order to get a qualified registry under the distance modality.

A. Curriculum approach and structure: The LLEI program belongs to the Facultad de Educación, which perceives the “Núcleo problematizador” as the core that relates

different aspects from the theoretical and factual reality. This generates inquiries that feed the statement of pedagogical research problems. The different “Campos de formación” fields of formation that integrate the curricular approach within the program are:

- Formación en Humanidades - Campo Humanístico
- Formación en Lengua Extranjera - Campo Específico
- Formación en Pedagogía - Campo Pedagógico
- Formación en Comunicación - Campo de Comunicación
- Formación en TIC - Campo TIC y TAC
- Formación en Investigación - Campo Investigativo

B. **Pedagogical and didactic guidelines:** The distance education modality is implemented in this program as a way to consider a new conception of teaching and learning, with an emphasis on self-directed learning and a dynamic management of time, space, and learning abilities. In addition, a challenge for Colombia with programs under the distance modality is to increase enrolled students without decreasing the quality of education, offering diminished costs, guaranteeing permanence, and facilitating interdisciplinary work. About the guidelines, the Universidad Santo Tomás (2018), mentions:

“Desde el marco educativo institucional, la Facultad de Educación de la Vicerrectoría de Universidad Abierta y a Distancia de la USTA establece la gestión y operación de sus procesos de formación, lineamientos pedagógicos y didácticos, los cuales describen las mediaciones para la promoción del conocimiento, desarrollo de competencias y contenidos en sus programas, entre ellos la Licenciatura en Lengua Extranjera Inglés.” [From the institutional educational framework, the Facultad de

Educación of the Vicerrectoría de Universidad Abierta y a Distancia of the USTA establishes the management and operation of its training processes, pedagogical and didactic guidelines, which describe the mediations for the promotion of knowledge, development of competencies and content in its programs, including the Bachelor's Degree in English as a Foreign Language.] (p. 26).

In that way, the problematic core of this program is:

“Given the weaknesses and needs in the teaching and learning processes of English as a foreign language in Colombia as well as the demands of national education policies, comprehensive education of qualified, critical, ethical, and creative teachers becomes necessary. All this with the purpose of having English teachers who make relevant contributions to the transformation of the educational realities in their communities” (Universidad Santo Tomás, 2018, pg. 34).

C. **Organization of academic activities (credits):** The “Decreto 1075 de 2015” mentions that the programs offered under the distance modality must be organized in academic credits in the way they consider is better for them. According to the “Resolución 2755 de 2006, Artículo 3”, one academic credit corresponds to 48 hours of student’s work which includes face to face time with the teacher and autonomous hours of independent work, as well as pedagogical practices. This program is divided into three cycles: Fundamentación, Profesionalización, and Profundización. The total credits of the program are organized in this way:

- Fundamentación: 78 credits.
- Profesionalización: 59 credits.
- Profundización: 17 credits.

D. **Pedagogical practice:** According to the renewed curriculum, the students have ten academic spaces to develop their pedagogical practice. Five spaces correspond to the fundamental formation area and five from the professional formation area. The pedagogical practice from the first to the fifth level of the common area aims to have the student recognize those practices as the center for social and cultural development. Even though the program is under the distance modality, the university has partnership with different educational contexts for the students to develop their pedagogical practice for the five subjects of the professional formation area.

E. **Research:** The research component at Universidad Santo Tomás, based on the thoughts of Tomás de Aquino, is defined as an outgoing process of knowledge, open to inquiry, debate, and search of solutions to the issues that affect society. In 2016-2018, the program consolidated the macroproject and two subprojects. Within the LLEI program, the research component encourages integral formation and at the same time, looks for the resolution of pedagogical, didactic, linguistic, and social problems, taking advantage of autonomy, a reflective critical spirit, and a social commitment with the context. This research component is mandatory throughout the career to prepare the students to comply with the thesis or research project as one of the graduation options offered.

F. **Educational media:** Through the distance modality, the Universidad Santo Tomás addresses mediation such as the materials, resources, and communication channels that the teacher utilizes in the teaching process and the students in the auto-learning process,

acquiring the knowledge, problems resolution and creativity. Below, the resources that correspond to the nature of the modality, are presented:

- **Virtual classroom:** It is an educational platform called “Moodle”, defined as a resource to develop academic subjects according to the curriculum, in which 100% of the students and teachers can access the subject’s registered semester by semester. This resource facilitates the communication between students and teachers. Each subject has a unique virtual classroom which is divided into these sections: *Disciplina, Actividades, Recursos, Evaluación, and Comunicaciones*.
- **E-books and Learning Management Systems (LMS):** This tool is dedicated to the specific field of English as a foreign language in which all the students can access a LMS system called “Mind” (Open Mind and Mastermind) from the MacMillan Editorial. This system is implemented in 8 of the 9 English levels offered in the program and it is aligned with the communicative objectives of the foreign language competence of the students.
- **Face-to-face and online tutoring and socializations sections:** There are spaces created as a fundamental resource to complement pedagogical spaces and encounters between students, regional tutors, and national teachers. These are divided into tutoring and socializations that can be face-to-face or virtual. All the students get a semester schedule that lists academic encounters for each academic space, depending on the Centro de Atención Universitaria (CAU) where students originally enrolled. Due to the nature of the modality, virtual meetings have been increasing compared with face-to-face encounters. In that way, tutoring g sessions

are not perceived as a traditional educational meeting, but as an interactive setting.

- **Web tools in pedagogical practices:** All students carry out their pedagogical practice under the orientation and advisory of national teachers in an educational institution, taking advantage of academic spaces to generate theoretic-practical learning and research problems. Nevertheless, there are other pedagogical practice subjects in which virtual mediation is crucial for the creation and evaluation of virtual classrooms, support to other English levels within the university through video conferencing and online resources, among other exercises of pedagogical practice and web tools.

G. **Library resources and CRAI:** Each *Centro de Atención Universitaria* (CAU) is provided with a library in which there are titles and copies considered necessary for consultation from the students. The Decanatura de División Abierta y a Distancia (DUAD) owns up-to-date libraries in each regional site and, a virtual library. All of them are an efficient tool for the teaching and research components according to the scientific and technological development of the country and the world. Additionally, the university has a virtual library under the *Centro de Recursos para el Aprendizaje y la Investigación* (CRAI) figure located in some cities and in all the CAUs around the country.

Among other resources, the university at distance counts with resources such as databases and book collections where teachers and students can draw on taking advantage of their connexion with specific areas of knowledge, some examples of databases are *Scielo*, *JSTOR*, *Redalyc*, *ERIC*, *EBSCO*, and others. Through the *Fondo Editorial*, the university also provides some

physical books that will be a fundamental part of the learning process without any additional costs.

H. **Communication dynamics within the USTA:** Based on the methodology and nature of the distance education modality, the mediation for teaching and learning requires a permanent interaction between students, national teachers, regional tutors, and administrative staff; the program involves communication mechanisms, face-to-face meetings, pedagogical practice gatherings, research component spaces, and academic and pedagogical resources with a synchronous and asynchronous dimension.

- Internal communication systems within the USTA: For the university, the internal communication can be defined as the set of activities conducted in order to create and maintain good relationships among its members, using different communication media so they are informed, integrated, and motivated to contribute with the achievement of the mission, vision, and institutional objectives. Some of those resources are: *Boletines, Mesa de ayuda, Carteleras, Portal de la Universidad, Correo electrónico*, among others.

I. **Physical infrastructure:** The university incorporates an appropriate physical infrastructure which is in optimal conditions to facilitate the higher education labor. The physical facilities located in different cities around the country are designed to provide an adequate environment for the development of academic processes for all the programs offered, as well as allowing the operation of administrative activities, welfare university, and institutional services. For the Universidad Abierta y a Distancia and LLEI students, all the buildings and sites are available for pedagogical and academic purposes. The physical classrooms are provided with all

the necessary furniture and comply with the characteristics of aeration, ventilation, illumination, and visibility required for the development of academic activities. In addition to this, there are auditoriums and multiple rooms which are specially designed for complementary activities.

J. **Selection and evaluation mechanisms:** The university has specific processes of selection and evaluation of students and teachers. Regarding the teachers, in the *Política de Desarrollo Docente*, aspects related to entailment, constant training, wellness, and stimuli are described. Also, the university has a teacher recruitment guide created for the clarity in the selection processes and the stability of the teachers in their links with the university.

Regarding the students, the selection and enrollment process takes place in different steps: inscription of the aspirants, evaluation of ICFES scores, interview with the coordinator of the program, and official registration in the program.

Inferences about governmental requirements.

According to the “Decreto 1330 de 2015”, all the requirements described on the document need to be complied by the academic programs of higher education that seek to obtain the high-quality certificate without prejudice of the modality offered. In the “Resolución 18583 de 2017” and the “Resolución 15224 de 2020”, the methodology provided by academic programs of higher education must comply with the following components to get certified under quality standards: establish academic activities appropriate for the modality; provide face-to-face spaces to develop pedagogical practices; demonstrate they have technological, organizational, and pedagogical mediations; disposition of qualified human resources to perform in the modality and in the educational field. All the components must be met no matter the modality of the program.

On the other hand, the “Resolución 18583 de 2017” states that, for distance education specifically, the following elements must be fulfilled: the program must have physical and technological, and human infrastructure. In the same way, the “Resolución 15224 de 2020” points out that the program must contain technological support and constant advisory from the teachers to answer any doubt that the students may have.

Accordingly, due to the nature of the distance education modality, the requirements stipulated by the government to obtain a qualified registry are consequent with the technological mediations the modality needs to provide a high-quality education. These requirements benefit the EFL learning and teaching because they ensure that the program provides all the necessary resources to communicate and interact with others, no matter the modality the program is under.

Subcategory 2. EFL curricula in different modalities

Since there was a need to revise institutional, official, and governmental documents, there was also an inquiry to compare what other universities under different modalities are offering to aspirants and in that way, determine relevant aspects related to the components offered, the number of credits, the number of subjects, and so on.

Curricula contrast findings

After analyzing the data collected in the comparison of curricula from different universities and modalities, we noticed that some universities are organized in the way the components are arranged and the learning path. Specially, those universities are certified under quality standards since they meet what is required by the government for them to provide a quality education to Colombian students.

However, there are other universities that, even though have all the permissions to provide a higher education program, lack to provide some components and relevance to the target students, and for that, those institutions have opportunity areas to improve the program and get certified in the future.

Category 3. Contribution to society

Based on the interviews and sources consulted, the distance education modality has been an advantage for different people to study in a higher education institution without attending under the face-to-face modality. In this way, the distance education modality opens a door for students who are physically or chronologically separated from the teacher, for people developing multiple roles that require their attention and time, for aspirants who have different schedules than the ones offered in a program, and also for people that cannot economically afford a program with other modalities.

Alhih et al (2017) pointed out that the aim of online distance education is “to minimize the limitations of providing education service to large audiences and enable individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds to benefit from equal services.” (p. 2734). In other words, distance education intends to include students who, for different reasons, cannot select traditional methods of education. This is part of inclusive education.

Subcategory 1. Democratization Of Education

Liqing, Berci & He (2011), as cited in Kuzmina, Powell, Cwick, Khalid, & Sofo (2016), pointed out that a democratic education focuses on open access and equal opportunities, with the ability to select what to study and with a fair chance of success. With this, the author is trying to

explain that students can decide what they want to study regardless of their socio-economic background, location, or other roles they perform, so they access education without exclusion.

About democratizing education, Universidad Nacional del Mar de Plata (n.d.) mentions that it facilitates access to education to all citizens that wish to take advantage of a permanent, relevant, and quality training in any educational level. In this sense, inclusion is the core of an attempt to provide education to everyone. About this, the same author says that “Reflexionar sobre la democratización de la educación nos invita a indagar el sentido y razón de ser de la educación y cómo las dimensiones mencionadas inciden en las prácticas educativas.” [Reflecting on the democratization of education invites us to investigate the meaning and reason for being of education and how the dimensions affect educational practices] (para. 1) Those dimensions include social, ethic, politic, and pedagogic levels.

Fengliang, Mengying, and Baolong (2014), as cited in Alhih et al (2017), mentioned that distance education “supports lifelong learning by offering equal opportunities in education and technological opportunities provide to people from different geographical locations.” (p. 2734). With “lifelong learning”, the author tries to explain that education is continued even after the professional and formal training, meaning that learning does not stop after getting a professional degree.

No barriers to learn.

The participants of this research mentioned that distance education was a good opportunity to be educated and get a professional degree for different purposes, thinking in their personal, familiar, economic, and geographical contexts. According to Altunay & Mutlu (2010), distance education “removes physical barriers among learners and tutors and gives learners the

chance to study whenever and wherever they want.” (p. 464). With, distance education has no limits of geographical places or fixed schedules, as students are able to manage their time.

It is known that over the past years, the advances of technology have contributed to changes in distance education learning, providing a term of “flexibility” of time and place in which students obtain knowledge. About flexibility, Nakazawa (2009) said that:

It has opened the door to study opportunities for a group of people who otherwise would have had to give up their dreams of obtaining a higher education. These people were physically restricted from attending courses by such factors as work or family commitments. (p. 405).

All the participants mentioned that because of economic resources, family duties, and their geographical location, they decided to study at distance instead of face-to-face modality.

Interview 1. Isabel. May 6, 2020: “La educación a distancia me permitió ser mamá, estar yo en casa manejando mi tiempo, tenía que también saber distribuirlo, porque tampoco podía dedicar todo el tiempo al estudio... Definitivamente, la educación a distancia le ofrece a uno muchas posibilidades de poder manejar trabajo, familia, y seguir estudiando, de aprender muchas cosas.”

Interview 1. Adrián. May 6, 2020: “Siento que la educación a distancia es un tipo de educación adicional que se puede dar, que ayuda mucho a democratizarla, porque precisamente hay muchas universidades que no quedan cerca por ejemplo a las ciudades de algunos alumnos entonces les queda más fácil si ellos estudian a distancia, porque no tienes que estar directamente con el profesor todo el tiempo, pero aun así puedes adquirir este tipo de conocimiento. Entonces siento que sí ayuda a democratizar mucho el tema educativo, porque pues los límites físicos ya no existen. “

Focus group. Isabel. October 7, 2020: “A mí me permitió poder ir a mi propio ritmo y poder ser mamá, esposa, trabajo y estudio. Entonces si es una facilidad para las personas que lo escogen no está cumpliendo uno un horario que le den a uno en la universidad, sino que uno maneja su propio horario y ritmo de trabajo.”

Theorization and findings

Based on the data collection, the process of analysis, and the definition of the categories emerged, the findings of this study are arranged in the following topics in terms of theoretical understanding.

Assumptions and preconceptions about distance education

The participants of this study mentioned that, to ensure the operation of the modality, it is important that the people that are involved in it believe and trust the process. It is common to find that people that have not worked with the modality tend to talk about it and make a judgement a priori. Nevertheless, some people that gave the distance modality a chance, have a positive perception based on the experience they have had.

For this reason, it is important to consider the instruction and education about the distance modality to people in Colombia who have not had the opportunity to know more about it considering the sanitary emergency that started in 2020, in which people did not have the choice to learn than using ICT tools and distance education.

Autonomy as an important skill

One of the most important competencies that people acquire and strengthen with distance education is autonomy. This skill makes students be responsible for their own learning path, since they act with independence. During the learning process, they manage to organize their time and schedules, to self-regulate their character, to motivate themselves and their peers since the teacher is not always available, and to self-reflect into their weaknesses and strengths. In addition, students not only learn to be autonomous in their studies, but also for their life. In their

daily tasks, they learn to organize their time effectively so they can achieve all their roles. Also, they learn to look for solutions when a person is not around to help them.

In this sense, distance education is not concerned for the academic process of the students only, but instead, students acquire skills that help them to perform their personal and professional roles. This modality shapes the students' character and forms the way they face reality.

Democratizing education

Distance education provides an opportunity to access higher education no matter the students' location, socio-economic status, and different roles performed in their daily lives; distance education does not differentiate people. On the contrary, distance education intends to provide services to any person that, for any reason, cannot select traditional settings. It is important to note that, traditional education such as the face-to-face modality, offers education locally; however, distance education offers education globally.

Thus, the purpose of this modality is to mitigate the barriers that might exist between the students and the professional program of their interest. Given this, distance education intends to impact positively on Colombian society by including students from different backgrounds, possibilities, and locations.

Policies of distance education and its quality

After reading and consulting institutional, official, and governmental documents, we noticed that there is not a distinction between what is required from a qualified face-to-face program and what is required from a qualified program under the distance modality. The only difference is that distance education is mediated through the ICT tools while other modalities

such as face-to-face use traditional methods; but due to the nature of the distance modality and the separation of teachers and students, ICT must be implemented and therefore, demanded.

In addition, after comparing curricula from different universities and modalities with what is offered in the LLEI program at DUAD, there were some similar components offered by other universities, but something relevant is that ICT tools are not a priority in programs under traditional education, according to the nature of the modality. Nevertheless, due to the aforementioned “emergency education” that emerged from the pandemic, it is imperative that universities integrate the education of ICT tools in their curricula, so students are prepared for the upcoming technological advent.

To conclude, since there are no substantial differences between governmental requirements for face-to-face programs and programs under the distance education modality, in addition to the similarity on the outcomes that students from both modalities have, distance education is as qualified as its counterpart, the face-to-face modality. The above, believing that distance education depends on the use of ICT tools to deliver education while face-to-face education depends on other sources like classrooms, boards, chairs, among others.

The relation between interaction, ICT tools, and infrastructure in distance education

People often perceive distance education as a modality in which interaction is minimal due to the teacher does not present in all the learning process. However, interaction does happen in distance education, and it is a critical factor that ensures the learning outcomes are achieved. Interaction in distance education has two types: synchronous and asynchronous, in which the former is arranged like meetings and the latter can happen at any time, like a forum. In addition, the teacher needs to be aware of the students’ needs in order to mitigate the space between them.

On the other hand, it is known that ICT tools are a fundamental part of the distance modality, but their correct function depends on the use the teacher applies to them and their knowledge to carry out the correct strategies of interaction. Also, the infrastructure in distance education is crucial to ensure interaction and effectiveness of distance delivery, since it is important to understand that an online presentation is not distance education, the students desire and deserve interaction with their peers and with the teacher.

In this way, taking advantage of ICT tools and the implementation of infrastructure components to support the delivery of distance education, it is more effective to achieve interaction within the participants.

Reflections about the arrival of a pandemic and its meaning for distance education learners and teachers

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there were some challenges for traditional education systems. They shifted all their mediations to an online emergency education. Both students and teachers had to adapt to the changes and learn how to overcome the difficulties of virtual meetings, technological resources, and other ways to teach/learn than they were accustomed to.

However, for distance education teachers and students, there was not a difference between the way they learned to communicate, develop their tasks, and accomplish their goals using technology and ICT tools. The only difference is that the monthly face-to-face meeting was replaced by another virtual gathering. Also, their pedagogical practice was conducted through virtual mediations like other universities. This means that distance education was also prepared for this sanitary event.

Contributions and Implications

Among the contributions this Case Study intends to make to the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés bachelor program at Universidad Santo Tomás, include:

- To provide visibility of the program for Colombian people, so they can get knowledge about how this program works, how the distance education modality is implemented there, and to share some experiences the former students and teachers provided.

Describing the methodology of the distance education modality and the program under study, among other aspects of resources, strategies and policies, it is easier to understand how they really work instead of making a judgement about something we do not know. In short, the program and the modality can be visible to people who are not familiar with them.

- To enrich the Research Field the LLEI has stipulated, the Macroproject “Understanding and Characterizing EFL in the LLEI: Experiences and phenomena in the pre-service teachers’ education contexts” and the subproject 4 “Understanding English teaching and learning contexts in EFL education”, considering that this Case Study describes the students’ education contribution offered by the program and the modality. The reason this research study contributes to the whole research field is that, a specific context (LLEI under the distance modality) is described in order to get an understanding of how EFL teaching and learning is developed there and its implications to the society it is related with (students and teachers).
- To recognize the efforts of the administrators and teachers to ensure the correct operation of the program, following the requirements established by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) and the Comité Nacional de Acreditación (CNA). Being a student of the

program does not mean that the challenges administrators and teachers conduct are properly recognized in terms of the requirements the program must complete in order to get a high quality accreditation. For that reason, the description of the governmental rules and institutional decrees and resolutions were analyzed, so we could get a better idea about the way the program complies with quality standards.

In the same way, this Case Study aspires to describe the contribution distance education can offer to the participants of it, since the topics covered with the categories intend to reveal the significance this modality has in the experience of former students and teachers in real-life contexts, what needs to be reinforced and what the modality is doing well with.

Scope for Further Research

This research study was initiated from the researchers' experience, but took shape while collecting data from the participants. Due to the wide topic selected, which is the distance education modality, it was necessary to set boundaries, which is why they limited the study to the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés bachelor program at Universidad Santo Tomás.

Some limitations found in this study are related to the selection of the categories selected. In order not to extend the study and to be focused on the object, the researchers selected specific themes to deepen on (the most relevant) to answer the research question.

For the above, extension of the research can be focused to deepen the categories analyzed, so other areas related to the distance education modality can be reviewed. Also, another context (an EFL program under the distance modality in another university), country, or culture can be considered to conduct a study on how the distance modality provides a quality education there.

Annexes

Annex A. Former students' interview

1. Tell me about you.
 - Where were you born?
 - Your age
 - Where do you live now?
 - Are you single or married?
2. Where did you study? Where did you learn English? What do you think about the face-to-face modality and the distance and virtual modality? Do you consider that the modality under you studied inhibit or facilitate your job? Explain.
3. Now about your current performance as a teacher.

Where do you currently teach? What position do you have there? How long have you been working in this place? Why do you work there? How do you feel working there? What would you change? What motivates you to work with them? (From these three questions, more can come out about current work and current performance as well as what enabled you to get to that point.)
4. Where is this institution or community?
5. Tell me about its context, the methodology proposed by the institution, or that you use.
6. Is there a dissonance between what you learned at the university and what you teach in the practice?

Annex B. Former students' demographic information

Name	Laboral Context	Location	Age	Graduation year	Student's type	Similarities	Differences
Sara	English teacher in multi-grade d rural school	Gaviotas del Caranal, Arauca, Colombia	33	2018	Elementary school	* Likes for learning English. * Vocation to teach. * Need to study and work at the same time,	She studied at distance as the only way to get her degree, since she lives and works in a rural area

Isabel	Religion teacher in private bilingual school	Barranquilla, Colombia	49	2019	Elementary school	among other roles	She postponed her career three times for different reasons, but achieved to finish
Adrian	English teacher in languages academy	São Paulo, Brazil	29	2018	Teenagers and adults		He finished the career almost on time while he had to work and pay for his studies
Pablo	English teacher at languages institution	Bogotá, Colombia	29	2018	Teenagers		He got a scholarship and finished the career on time

Annex C. Focus group questions

Introductory questions

Can you define technique and strategy? Can you differentiate between them?

What strategies to learn a foreign language did you use? Why?

What techniques did you use to learn other subjects different from English?

What do you consider was the most challenging skill to learn and practice? How did you practice these skills? What resources did you use?

Transition question

No sé si a ustedes les han dicho, pero la gente suele asociar el saber inglés como una oportunidad profesional en Colombia y en el extranjero. Se suele escuchar que saber otro idioma te da una posición privilegiada en la sociedad. ¿Creen que el ser licenciado en inglés privilegia su posición profesional? ¿De qué manera?

Key questions

En el transcurso de los últimos años, como lo menciona un artículo de El Tiempo publicado en 2018, se han tenido buenas referencias con respecto a la educación virtual y a distancia, mencionando casos de algunas personas que pudieron completar sus estudios de forma 100% virtual. Sin embargo, en un artículo de opinión publicado por la revista 20 minutos en 2011, menciona que escoger esta modalidad dependerá de la autonomía y organización del estudiante, además de la falta de interacción con docentes y estudiantes que la modalidad a distancia no provee. Con base a su experiencia, ¿qué opinan de esto?

¿Creen que la educación a distancia puede ser aplicada para el aprendizaje de cualquier profesión?

La División Abierta y a Distancia de la universidad Santo Tomás, en su sección de admisiones menciona que por su flexibilidad en el horario que permite realizar diferentes actividades alternas (trabajar, cursar otro programa, etc.), esta sugiere escoger la modalidad a distancia. ¿Cómo creen que esta flexibilidad se hizo presente en su proceso educativo? ¿Flexibilidad con respecto a qué?

Do you think your autonomy improved after studying this program at distance? How did you organize your time?

What do you think are the pros and cons of studying a Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés in a distance modality that includes English, pedagogy, and other subjects?

Closing

Debido a las condiciones de salud descritas por la OMS y el Ministerio de Educación en Colombia, la mayoría de los procesos laborales han migrado de una interacción face-to-face a sesiones virtuales. Durante este tiempo de pandemia, ¿cómo ha sido su experiencia y qué recursos han utilizado?

¿Creen que la universidad los preparó de algún modo para enfrentar esta reestructuración en los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje? ¿Qué recursos dados o enseñados en la universidad han sido de utilidad durante estos tiempos?

Sheryl: We appreciate your participation in this discussion, your opinions and for sharing your experiences. So far, we have discussed... (based on the discussion, I summarize all the contributions). Is this an appropriate summary?

Remember that the purpose of this discussion was to gather all your ideas, perceptions, beliefs, and experiences regarding the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés program at Santo Tomás University and the distance modality with which you were involved. Would you like to add something before we finish?

Annex D. Comparative charts between curriculums***Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD – Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés Universidad Distrital (Public University)***

DUAD	Universidad Distrital	
	Similarities	Differences
-It has 10 semesters. -English component from 1st to 9th semester. -Between 5th and 6th subjects by semester. -Research component 3,4, and 5 semesters in Spanish and 6,7, and 8 semesters in English. -From the 6th semester, 90% of the subjects are taught in English. -Pedagogical component starts in 1st semester and finishes in 10th semester. From 1 to 5 (Spanish) and 6 to 10th in English. -This program has 56 subjects. -Total credits: 157 -Distance modality (blended learning)	-It has 10 semesters. - English component from 1st to 6th semester. -Research component 6,7, and 8 semesters in English. -Degree project in 9th and 10th semester with subject names (Trabajo de Grado 1 work and Trabajo de Grado 2) - Subjects: Literature in English 1 and Literature in English 2 must be taken in semester 7 and 8. - From 6 semester 90% of the subjects are taught in English. -This program has 55 subjects. --Total credits: 136	- This program has fewer levels of English. - L.L.E.I (Universidad Distrital): The number of subjects per semester are between 4 or 5. L.L.E.I at DUAD has 6 per semester. - L.L.E.I (Universidad Distrital): From the second semester, at least half of the subjects are taught in English. -L.L.E. I at Universidad Distrital has pedagogical practicum. In 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th semester. L.L.E.I at DUAD has pedagogical practicum in 9th and 10th semester. -Face to Face modality. -Pedagogical component in English has place on 5,6 and 7th semesters. The first semester has One subject about pedagogy in Spanish.

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD – Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (Public University)

DUAD	UNAD
------	------

	Similarities	Differences
-It has 10 semesters. -English component from 1st to 9th semester. -Between 5th and 6th subjects by semester. -Research component 3,4, and 5 semesters in Spanish and 6,7, and 8 semesters in English. -From the 6th semester, 90% of the subjects are taught in English. -Pedagogical component starts in 1st semester and finishes in 10th semester. From 1 to 5 (Spanish) and 6 to 10th in English. -This program has 56 subjects. -Total credits: 157 -Distance modality (blended learning)	-It has 10 semesters. - English component from 1st to 7th semester. -Between 5 and 6 subjects by semester. -Research component has 2 subjects in Spanish, these take place in 3rd and 4th semester. Research project in 10th semester. - Subject: Herramientas digitales para gestión del conocimiento (with purpose of learning how to teach through ICT) -This program has 59 subjects. -Total credits: 160 -Virtual modality	- This program has fewer levels of English. - From 4th semester 90% of the subjects are taught in English. -UNAD has an extensive pedagogical component in English, it begins in 4th semester and finishes in 10th semester with 2 subjects about to teach in Online environments. It has three phases which are developed gradually, as you can see in the annex. - UNAD L.L.E.E.I program has 6 subjects in the last semester.

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD – Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas con Énfasis en Inglés Universidad La Gran Colombia (Private University)

DUAD	Universidad La Gran Colombia
-------------	-------------------------------------

	Similarities	Differences
-It has 10 semesters. -English component from 1st to 9th semester. -Between 5th and 6th subjects by semester. -Research component 3,4, and 5 semesters in Spanish and 6,7, and 8 semesters in English. -From the 6th semester, 90% of the subjects are taught in English. -Pedagogical component starts in 1st semester and finishes in 10th semester. From 1 to 5 (Spanish) and 6 to 10th in English. -This program has 56 subjects. -Total credits: 157 -Distance modality (blended learning)	-It has 10 semesters -Between 5 ,6 or 7 subjects by semester. -From 6 semester 90% of the subjects are taught in English. -This program has 62 subjects. -Pedagogical component starts in 1st semester and finishes in 10th semester. From 1 to 5 (Spanish) and 6 to 10th in English. -Total credits: 158 -Face to Face modality	- This program has fewer levels of English. -English component has 5 levels; these are from 1st to 5th semester. - From 4th semester 90% of the subjects are taught in English. -Research component has 2 only three subjects, the first one are about Fundamentals of Research and the others are Research Project 1 and 2. -This program has training in another foreign language (French) but the majority of subjects are in English.

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés DUAD – Licenciatura en inglés at EDUPOL in partnership with Corporación Universitaria del Caribe - CECAR (Private University)

DUAD	EDUPOL	
	Similarities	Differences
-It has 10 semesters. -English component from 1st to 9th semester.	* ICT resources and technological tools.	* It has 170 credits. * 8 semesters.

-Between 5th and 6th subjects by semester. -Research component 3,4, and 5 semesters in Spanish and 6,7, and 8 semesters in English. -From the 6th semester, 90% of the subjects are taught in English. -Pedagogical component starts in 1st semester and finishes in 10th semester. From 1 to 5 (Spanish) and 6 to 10th in English. -This program has 56 subjects. -Total credits: 157 -Distance modality (blended learning)		* All subjects are taught in Spanish, or at least, their names are in Spanish. * It has only five levels of English all the career. * Six semesters have pedagogical components/subjects. * Three semesters have research subjects. * One semester has a professional practice and the other has an integral practice. * The program has 44 subjects. * Virtual modality.
---	--	--

Annex E. Teachers' interview questions

Questions

- Describe differences between EFL Teaching and learning at distance and at face-to face modalities.
- Do you think that EFL Teaching and learning at distance have disadvantages? If yes, how have you evidenced that devaluation?
- Can a person learn foreign languages under the distance modality?
- Would you think EFL teaching and learning at distance doesn't encourage the interaction between teacher-student and student-student?
- Have you had any meaningful teaching experience in distance education that you have not had in the face-to-face modality?
- Would you say that all theoretical subjects can be taught and learned at distance including Foreign Languages?
- What are the skills developed in EFL teaching and learning in a distance education modality compared to a face-to-face modality?
- Have you heard or experienced any kind of judgement of EFL in the distance modality? If so, how was that experience?
- What do you consider the advantages or disadvantages of EFL teaching and learning in the distance education modality?

- How do you consider the ICT tools the basis of EFL teaching and learning?
- Do you think that people's perception about distance education have changed with the arrival of the pandemic in 2020 regarding distance education? Why?

Specific questions for teacher V and teacher M:

Observing the curriculum of programs in Bachelor in English as a Foreign Language from Universities such as Universidad Distrital, Universidad Gran Colombia, UNAD, and Edupol. The credits are distributed in different ways, some of them have a major number of credits in English and Pedagogical components than others.

- Based on your experience as a coordinator of a language program at distance, what factors influence the distribution of credits for each program, specifically those related to the language development and the pedagogical component?
- What was your experience like with the certification (accreditation) process of the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés when you were a coordinator of the program?
- In the Feedback given by CNA, what were the comments?

Annex F. Data analysis

Below you can find all the documents in which the data was analyzed. Due to the amount of information displayed there, we attached the hyperlinks of the documents for their revision.

- [Interview to former students analysis](#)
- [Focus group transcription](#)
- [Focus group analysis](#)
- [Teacher's interview analysis](#)
- [Curricula comparison analysis and chart](#)

References

- Abrami, P. C., Bernard, R. M., Bures, E. M., Borokhovski, E., & Tamim, R. M. (2011). Interaction in distance education and online learning: using evidence and theory to improve practice. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 23(2–3), 82–103. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-011-9043-x>
- Agencia NotiPress (2021). Qué propuestas existen para enfrentar los retos de la educación a distancia. Retrieved from <https://www.mypress.mx/vida/algunas-propuestas-para-enfrentar-los-retos-de-la-educacion-a-distancia-8856>.
- AKGÜN, E. (2015). A classification of student skills and competences in open and distance learning. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*. 6(17). 174-185. Retrieved from http://www.ijonte.org/FileUpload/ks63207/File/17.akgun_ozbek.pdf
- Al Zumor, A. W., Al Refaai, I. K., Eddin, E. A., & Al-Rahman, F. H. (2013). EFL Students' Perceptions of a Blended Learning Environment: Advantages, Limitations and Suggestions for Improvement. *English Language Teaching*, 6(10), 95–110. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n10p95>
- Alhih, M., Ossiannilsson, E., & Berigel, M. (2017). Levels of Interaction Provided by Online Distance Education Models. *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 13(6), 2733–2748. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eurasia.2017.01250a>

- Altunay, D. (2019). EFL Students' Views on Distance English Language Learning in a Public University in Turkey. *Studies in English Language Teaching*, 7(1), 121–134.
<https://doi.org/10.22158/selt.v7n1p121>
- Altunay, D., & Mutlu, M. E. (2010). Distance foreign language learning. The experience of Anadolu University. *Distances Et Savoirs*, 8(3), 463-473. doi:10.3166/ds.8.463-473
- Barberà, E. (2013). Educación abierta y a distancia. Editorial UOC. Retrieved from
<https://elibro.net/es/ereader/usta/56349?page=28>
- Benavides, N. Y., & Guerrero, D. L. (2013). Cercanía, dependencia y conflicto en la relación docente-estudiante con el desempeño académico.
<https://ridum.umanizales.edu.co/xmlui/handle/20.500.12746/578>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203224342>
- CourseFinders (2017). *¿Es mejor un curso de idioma a distancia o presencial?* Retrieved from
<https://coursefinders.com/blog/es/6915/espanol-es-mejor-un-curso-de-idioma-distancia-o-presencial>
- El Universal. (2014). Mineducación anuncia «Colombia Very Well», estrategia nacional de bilingüismo.
<https://www.eluniversal.com.co/educacion/mineducacion-anuncia-colombia-very-well-es-trategia-nacional-de-bilinguismo-164634-JXEU258203>
- El País (2020). ¿Se puede de verdad aprender inglés desde casa?. Retrieved from
https://elpais.com/sociedad/2020/09/01/actualidad/1598961833_105392.html.

- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American journal of theoretical and applied statistics*, 5(1), 1-4.
- García, L. (2012). ¿Por qué va ganando la educación a distancia? UNED - Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia. <https://elibro.net/es/ereader/usta/48401?page=22>
- Gillham, B. (2000). Case study research methods. ProQuest Ebook Central
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Giraldo, F. (2014). The Impact of a Professional Development Program on English Language Teachers' Classroom Performance. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 16(1), 63–76. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v16n1.38150>
- Griffiee, D. (2012). *An Introduction to Second Language Research Methods: Design and Data*. TESL-EJ Publications: California.
- Guri-Rosenblit, S. (2005). 'Distance Education' and 'E-Learning': Not the Same Thing. *Higher Education*, 49(4), 467-493. Retrieved June 10, 2021, from
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25068081>
- Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). Case Study Research: Foundations and Methodological Orientations. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-18.1.2655>
<https://edupol.com.co/licenciatura-en-ingles/#1556914802029-035a87fe-6b8e>
- Holmberg, B. (1999). The Conversational Approach to Distance Education, *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 14:3, 58-60, DOI:
10.1080/0268051990140309

- Hismanoglu, M. (2012). Prospective EFL Teachers' Perceptions of ICT Integration: A Study of Distance Higher Education in Turkey. *Educational Technology & Society*, 15 (1), 185–196. August 28, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.15.1.185>
- Kim, W (2007). Towards a Definition and Methodology for Blended Learning. En Joseph Fong, Fu Lee Wang (Eds). *Workshop on Blended Learning* (pp. 1-8). Edinburgh, United Kingdom. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3zPUTbj>
- Kuzmina, S. A., Powell, D., Cwick, S., Khalid, T., & Sofo, S. (2016). Democratization of Education in Emerging Countries. 15 (1).
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (n.d.). Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo. Colombia Aprende: La red del conocimiento. Retrieved on August 10, 2021, from <http://aprende.colombiaaprende.edu.co/es/colombiabilingue/86689>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (n.d.). Programa Nacional de Fortalecimiento de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras. Colombia Aprende: La red del conocimiento. Retrieved on August 8, 2021, from <https://aprende.colombiaaprende.edu.co/es/colombiabilingue/86716>
- Moore R.L., Fodrey B.P. (2018) Distance Education and Technology Infrastructure: Strategies and Opportunities. In: Piña A., Lowell V., Harris B. (eds) *Leading and Managing e-Learning*. Educational Communications and Technology: Issues and Innovations. Springer, Cham. https://doi-org.crai-ustadigital.usantotomas.edu.co/10.1007/978-3-319-61780-0_7

- Ochoa Alpala, C. A., & Roberto Flórez, E. E. (2011). Blended Learning in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language: An Educational Challenge. *HOW Journal*, 18(1), 154-168. Retrieved from <https://howjournalcolombia.org/index.php/how/article/view/57>
- Poon, J (2013). *Blended learning: an institutional approach for enhancing students' learning experiences*. *Journal of online learning and teaching*, 9(2), 271-288. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30057995>
- Portafolio (2020). Todo un desafío, enseñar y aprender inglés en pandemia. Retrieved from <https://www.portafolio.co/economia/todo-un-desafio-ensenar-y-aprender-ingles-en-pandemia-544334>.
- Shachar, M., & Neumann, Y. (2003). Differences Between Traditional and Distance Education Academic Performances: A meta-analytic approach. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*. 4(2). Retrieved from <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/153/704>
- Shkedi, A. (2005). *Multiple Case Narrative: A qualitative approach to studying multiple populations*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Sierra Varón, C. A. (2012). *Educación virtual, aprendizaje autónomo y construcción de conocimiento*. Editorial Politécnico Grancolombiano. <https://elibro.net/es/ereader/usta/70988?page=12>
- Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Soliman, N. A. (2014). Using E-Learning to Develop EFL Students' Language Skills and Activate Their Independent Learning. *Creative Education*, 05(10), 752–757.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2014.510088>

Stake, R. R. E. (2013). *Investigación con estudio de casos*. Madrid, Ediciones Morata, S. L.

Retrieved from <https://elibro.net/es/ereader/usta/94000?page=12>

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. Sage publications.

Universia (2018). ¿Es efectivo el aprendizaje de idiomas online?. Retrieved from

<https://www.universia.net/co/actualidad/orientacion-academica/efectivo-aprendizaje-idio-mas-online-1158639.html>

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. (n.d.) Plan de Estudios - Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés. Retrieved from:

<http://liclenguasmodernas.udistrital.edu.co:8080/plan-de-estudios>

Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata. (n.d.). La democratización de la educación y las iniciativas de la UNMdP. Ediciones Virtuales SEAD. Retrieved on August 14, 2021, from

<https://www.mdp.edu.ar/uabierta/editorialvirtual/05/editorial05.htm>

Universidad Santo Tomas (2018). Documento Maestro. Licenciatura en Lengua Extranjeras ingles. Renovacion de Registro Calificado.Facultad de Educacion DUAD.

Universidad Santo Tomás (n.d). Historia de la Modalidad Distancia en la Universidad Santo Tomás. Retrieved from

http://soda.ustadistancia.edu.co/enlinea/clarajaramillo_metodologia1/historia_de_la_modalidad_distancia_en_la_universidad_santo_toms.html

Universidad Santo Tomás. (n. d.). Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras Inglés. Facultad de Educación - DUAD. Retrieved from

<http://facultadeduccion.ustadistancia.edu.co/index.php/programas-de-pregrado/licenciatura-en-lenguas-extranjeras-ingles>

Universidad Santo Tomas. (2017). Licenciatura en Lengua Extranjera Inglés. Plan de estudios.

Retrieved from:

<http://facultadeduccion.ustadistancia.edu.co/index.php/plan-de-estudios-licedextrang>

Walker, D., & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: An exploration of process and procedure.

Qualitative Health Research, 16(4), 547-559.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1049732305285972>

White, C. (2003). Language Learning in Distance Education. Cambridge University Press.

White, C. (2006). Distance learning of foreign languages. Language Teaching, 39(4), 247–264.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444806003727>