

Emergency Remote EFL Learning, A Post-Pandemic Analysis of Indonesian and Colombian Students' Perceptions: A Quantitative Study

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Objective: Enhancing post-pandemic EFL (English as a Foreign Language) curricula through the incorporation the digital tools in conjunction with blended learning strategies has emerged as a compelling domain of scholarly inquiry in language learning. This study explored students' perceptions of emergency remote EFL learning in two private universities in Indonesia and Colombia, as well as the feedback provided by students towards English courses. **Method:** A quantitative study was applied. Surveys and focus groups were used to collect data that was analyzed by employing a Multigroup confirmatory factor analysis using R-4.3.1 statistical program and content analysis respectively. **Findings:** In both nations under examination, prevalent were a multitude of adverse perceptions encompassing challenges pertaining to social engagement, cognitive focus, and technological connectivity. Furthermore, a discernible disparity in the perceptions of Indonesian and Colombian students was evident across a spectrum of survey inquiries, encompassing variances in preferences, comfort levels, and perceptions of instructor comprehension. **Implication for Theory and Practice:** Integrating social interaction into online learning environments for optimizing foreign language acquisition would be valuable. **Conclusion:** Student feedback revealed the tech challenges behind courses as well as the emotional impact of neglect by governments in the global South.

Keywords: Covid 19, pandemic, emergency remote learning, EFL learning, students' perceptions.

1. Introduction

In response to the pervasive ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions worldwide shifted to online and remote courses temporarily (Kamal et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2020; Shim & Lee, 2020). In navigating this exigent educational landscape, students have encountered pressing challenges, compelling them to swiftly adapt to uncertain circumstances (Gutentag et

al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020). A notable challenge has been the prevailing perception of online learning as being of lower quality compared to traditional in-person classes (Hodges et al., 2020; Schultz & DeMers, 2020). Additionally, educators have expressed concerns regarding participant interaction and the overall quality of learning experiences in the virtual environment (Selvaraj et al., 2021).

Remarkably, issues related to internet access and the availability of requisite devices have emerged as significant impediments in the implementation of educational responses during this critical period. Furthermore, the emotional reactions of all stakeholders involved constitute a third dimension of consideration, underscoring the multifaceted nature of challenges faced in the context of emergency remote learning.

This research explores students' perceptions of emergency remote EFL learning in Colombia and Indonesia during the second year of the COVID-19 emergency at two private universities. The pandemic exposed education inequalities globally, with lockdowns widening gaps between rich and poor countries and communities (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Bellei et al., 2022; Martínez-Domínguez & Fierros-González, 2022; Raju et al., 2021). Countries such as Colombia and Indonesia, characterized by ongoing social unrest and limited economic redistribution, confront mutual challenges, notably the constraint of internet accessibility (International Communication Union, 2019; Lustig, 2016; MEN, 2021). These nations are actively fostering collaborative efforts, particularly in spheres like culture and education (IDN Financials, 2020).

In early 2022, the Indonesian Embassy in Bogota initiated the provision of Indonesian language courses, traditional dance instruction, and Pencak Silat training, tailored to suit the Colombian population. Furthermore, a secondary school in Bogota has integrated traditional dance and Pencak Silat into its extracurricular offerings. The palpable enthusiasm demonstrated by the Colombian community has generated substantial demand, compelling the Indonesian Embassy in Bogota to manage a surge in requests from various educational institutions, including schools and universities, seeking to engage with and understand aspects of Indonesian culture (Indonesian Embassy in Bogota, 2022).

A concerted global response to challenges such as those posed by COVID-19 holds promise for addressing a myriad of educational issues, both anticipated and unforeseen, that will likely confront our planet in the years ahead, including future pandemics. This presents an opportune moment to enhance international cooperation (Buitendijk et al., 2020). The establishment of cross-national partnerships has facilitated the creation of numerous new higher education institutions, drawing on the dual educational model of *Berufsakademie*. Examples include the European Business Academy (EWA) in Madrid, the European School of Management (ESM) in Tbilisi, Armenia, Cali, Bolivar, Bogota (Colombia), Shiyang (China), as well as institutions in Malang and Jakarta (Indonesia). While many of these institutions specialize in business administration and engineering, there is potential for broader involvement, including in the field of EFL education. Developments in higher education increasingly underscore the imperative of international collaboration (Reinhard, 2006).

Then, this research aims to understand students' perceptions of emergency remote EFL learning, identifying barriers and successes to enhance teaching processes. Examining the abrupt transition from in-person EFL courses to emergency remote modality is vital to

grasping student perceptions in such situations in both Colombia and Indonesia. Students tend to view online learning favorably, yet challenges persist in remote classes' perception, relating to "accessibility, affordability, flexibility, learning pedagogy, life-long learning, and educational policy" (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021, p.4), where economic background plays a significant role.

2. Literature review

Emergency remote learning

Emergency remote learning denotes a transient shift in instructional delivery to an alternative mode precipitated by crisis circumstances (Hodges et al., 2020). Hodges et al. (2021) delineate three critical characteristics—temporality, immediacy of the emergency, and remote instructional nature—essential for differentiation from terms prone to conflation, such as online learning or education in emergencies.

Schultz and DeMers (2020) assert that remote learning entails continual teacher-student interaction through digital tools, while blended learning involves face to face and online learning experiences. In contrast, online learning is a pre-planned, wholly virtual approach devoid of physical interaction. The emergence of emergency remote learning, a consequence of the pandemic, distinguishes itself from established methods like distance, blended, e-learning, and mobile learning. Entities such as the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) and Quality Matters (QM) responded by developing tools for remote instruction, thereby setting it apart from the meticulous instructional design inherent in online learning (Branch & Dousay, 2015; Means et al., 2022; QM, 2020). This emergent pedagogical paradigm has garnered attention, prompting scholarly exploration. Laslo-Roth et al. (2022) illuminate its impact on student emotions and pedagogical practices during the pandemic, highlighting the need to comprehend students' perceptions of emergency remote learning in the context of two private universities. Such insights could enrich our understanding of the distinctions between distance and face-to-face learning.

Theories addressing Emergency remote learning

The assessment of emergency remote and distance learning quality is intricately linked to perceptions, making perception a pivotal element in this evaluation. Notably, Ginns and Ellis conducted a meta-analysis highlighting the correlation between favorable student perceptions of blended learning and academic achievement, emphasizing the importance of perception in the educational context (2007). Recent analyses further underscore the centrality of student satisfaction in Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL), demonstrating its positive influence on the motivation and autonomous learning of Korean students in EFL (Pollard, 2015).

Moreover, scholarly investigations have documented satisfactory experiences in both online and face-to-face courses, coupled with technophilic orientations fostering positive attitudes towards online learning (Driscoll et al., 2012; Wright, 2017). As a result, a rigorous examination of the theories underpinning these analyses is imperative for obtaining a precise understanding of emergency remote learning dynamics. In essence, perception plays a critical role in evaluating the quality of emergency remote and distance learning and exploring the

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theoretical foundations of relevant analyses is essential for a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics.

Various theories, including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), have been employed in research to elucidate the significant impact of factors on the behavioral intention to use technology in emergency remote learning contexts (Al Kurdi et al., 2020; Granić & Marangunić, 2019; Rahmi et al., 2018; Zou et al., 2021). Examining the user's perspective, particularly in terms of ease of understanding, becomes pivotal in discerning the user's propensity and the degree to which they adapt to new technology, concurrently fostering a sense of optimism (Al Kurdi et al., 2020; Granić & Marangunić, 2019; Rahmi et al., 2018; Zou et al., 2021).

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) is another comprehensive framework aimed at comprehending and explaining users' attitudes and the influencing factors pertaining to the information technology utilized in emergency learning scenarios. In here, social influence, defined as "the degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe he or she should use the new system" (Venkatesh et al., 2003, p. 451), constitutes a pivotal aspect in the current study. This research regards social influence as the impact and support derived from individuals such as friends, social circles, educators, university management, and academic administrators, all contributing to the promotion of the use of animation and storytelling as integral components of the learning process.

Finally, the Community of Inquiry framework, widely applied online and blended learning research and practice, assumes significance in the present study. Employed to elucidate the predictors of students' attitudes towards their emergency remote learning experiences during the pandemic, the framework specifically focuses on teaching and learning aspects (Bamoallem & Altarteer, 2022; Usmani, 2021), which matches the categories from scales applied as it is illustrated below.

Figure 1. Emergency remote learning supporting theories and scales



Emergency remote learning, distinct from traditional face-to-face instruction, necessitates the utilization of robust instruments for evaluating students' perceptions. The Online Instructor Role Behavior Scale (OIRBS), introduced by Hung and Chou (2015), offers a comprehensive

framework categorizing online instructor roles, encompassing course design, discussion facilitation, social support, technology facilitation, and assessment design. Supported by literature reviews, particularly by Zhou et al. (2021), this scale aligns with established instructional technology theory.

To assess university perception, language skills, and general class aspects, the Perception of Online Synchronous Teaching and Learning (POSTOL) scale was employed. This scale's dimensions, pertaining to instructors' characteristics, social presence, instructional design, and trust, are particularly germane to the contemporary online learning milieu of our study, as evidenced by the works of Bhagat et al. (2016) and Hung and Chou (2015). Adaptations of the scales were implemented to gauge students' perceptions of remote EFL courses amid the COVID-19 emergency.

Students' perceptions of Emergency remote learning

Several studies have delved into the examination of students' perspectives regarding emergency remote learning. In the investigation conducted by Dushkevych et al. (2020), it was revealed that, despite many students successfully adapting to the new learning milieu, apprehensions were expressed concerning the quality of online learning. Contrastingly, students exhibited a preference for traditional face-to-face learning over remote alternatives, as elucidated by Matarirano et al. (2021). Furthermore, a proclivity towards a blended approach, incorporating on-demand and livestream lessons, was evident among students, as observed in the study by Lafleur et al. (2021).

Maydiantoro et al. (2020) reported a positive perception of the online remote learning environment among students in higher education institutions during the COVID-19 crisis. In the same way, Cho et al. (2021) observed a perceptible shift in the dynamics of social support, with students receiving increased support from instructors but a concomitant decrease in peer support. These collective findings emphasize the imperative for continual enhancements in the realm of emergency remote learning, particularly regarding aspects of quality, support mechanisms, and overall student well-being.

Emergency remote learning in Colombia and Indonesia

Contrasting student perceptions of emergency remote EFL courses in Indonesia and Colombia offers a holistic perspective on how cultural, infrastructural, and educational factors shape the efficacy of emergency remote learning in the global South. Examining these aspects provides insights into the impact of technological access on the effectiveness of emergency remote EFL courses.

During the emergency shift to remote learning, Colombian educational institutions encountered significant challenges stemming from economic disparities. Around 14,000 schools struggled to transition to new teaching methods, particularly due to inadequate teacher training, limited access to suitable technology, and insufficient infrastructure to support students (Peñafort & Pereira, 2022; Ray, 2020; Jaime-Osorio, Campos-Perdomo & Rodríguez-Artunduaga, 2023).

Regarding higher education, Colombian universities initiated a shift in their pedagogical approaches from traditional face-to-face instruction to remote methods. This led to an increased need for virtual pedagogical strategies (Contreras-Rodriguez et al., 2020). Most

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Colombian students reported concern about the quality of lessons, but they acknowledged their efforts to implement new teaching strategies (Villa Castaño, Durán, & Arohuanca Percca, 2022).

A study conducted by Colombian researchers involved the collection of data through questionnaires and focus groups with teachers and students to investigate primary challenges encountered. The results indicated that educators predominantly relied on technology-based instructional strategies. Additionally, teachers encountered difficulties in fostering student autonomy and promoting classroom interaction (Castañeda-Trujillo, & Jaime-Osorio, 2021). Another Colombian study identified internet connectivity as a primary issue faced by the educational community (Galindo Diago, 2022).

In the case of Indonesia, during the emergency induced by COVID-19, universities were forced to adopt innovative teaching approaches (Cahyadiet al, 2022; Hasani et al., 2020; Churiyah et al, 2020). Predominant challenges encountered in implementing distance learning included ensuring equitable distribution of infrastructure and mitigating costs related to internet access (Utomo, Sudayanto & Saddhono, 2020). A study conducted by the experts in various universities across Indonesia, aimed to identify primary tools for emergency education, highlighting the efficiency and common usage of Google Classroom, WhatsApp groups, and zoom for facilitating synchronous teaching sessions (Hasani et al., 2020; Utomo, Sudayanto & Saddhono, 2020).

Research questions

The present quantitative study explores the perceptions of Colombian and Indonesian students regarding emergency remote EFL courses in two private universities education students regarding their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The overarching research questions to explore students' perceptions as well as the course feedback are:

R1: What are the perceptions of Colombian and Indonesian students regarding emergency remote EFL courses?

Sub Q 1: What was the students' perception of the teacher's emergency remote instruction?

Sub Q 2: Are the Colombian and Indonesian students' perceptions different or similar in emergency remote EFL learning?

3. Methods

Participants

Participants in this study were 104 Indonesian and 78 Colombian undergraduates from 2 private universities. They were enrolled in EFL courses in institutions with student counts ranging from 15 to 22, and English proficiency levels were A2 and B2. Participants characteristics are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. General characteristics of the participants

	Colombian courses		Indonesian courses	
Course name	General	English	for	English Education
	undergraduate students			

Survey period	September-October 2021	September-October 2021
Number of respondents	78	104
Age range	18-23	20-24
Gender (Male and Female)	37 and 40, respectively (1 prefer not to say)	49 and 55, respectively
Location	Barranquilla, Colombia	Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Context

We interviewed and surveyed students regarding their perceptions of emergency remote EFL learning before and during the shift to face-to-face classes. We surveyed students at two private universities in Colombia and Indonesia, comparing survey results with data from focus groups. Consent forms were anonymously accepted, and an online survey was completed by students from August to October 2021. The survey aimed to understand perceptions of emergency EFL learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in distinct contexts. Questions were designed to compare Colombian and Indonesian students' perceptions. Online focus groups were conducted in each context, and responses were transcribed and thematically analyzed. Participants were both EFL courses in these countries adhere to the Common European Framework (CEFR) and are mandatory. The methodology emphasizes creativity, innovation, student-centered learning, and integrated skills. In Colombia, the curriculum revolves around themes, enabling students to apply speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills authentically over eight semesters. Conversely, Indonesian courses center on language functions, categorized into Language, Linguistics, Pedagogic, Research, and Curriculum Aspects, spanning eight semesters. Prior to the pandemic, Colombian students attended face-to-face classes four times weekly, using platforms like Blackboard, Zoom, and Google Classroom. In Indonesia, students engaged in twenty weekly hours via Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, and edlink/sevima.com.

Instrumentation

To ascertain the perceptions of Colombian and Indonesian students concerning emergency remote EFL learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, a quantitative approach was adopted. The study utilized two instruments sourced from existing research. Ethical approval was obtained from a committee to use these instruments. To ensure participants' comprehension, the instruments were translated into their primary language (L1). The study comprised two main phases: initially, a survey was administered online, followed by the organization of focus groups via Zoom to delve into individuals' experiences. These experiences were meticulously categorized after transcription.

Data Collection

In addressing the methodological approach, emergency remote learning demands a structured evaluation of students' perceptions, distinct from traditional face-to-face instruction. Questions for the focus groups were crafted with consideration of the (OIRBS) and the (POSTOL) scale. The questions adhered to the guidelines of these scales:

Table 2. Questions using the OIRBS and POSTOL scales

Social presence/trust	Instructional design		Social presence/trust
	Positive	Negative	
What was your perception about the university transition to emergency remote instruction?	Mention the most positive aspects of emergency remote classes	Mention the most negative aspects of emergency remote classes	What was your perception of learning English remotely?

After recording the answers, the responses were coded by using the negative, positive, and neutral perception codes, and the themes that emerged from this were summarized in the discussion below.

Specifically, a 7-question survey was administered based on the categories used by Yan et al. (2021), which contains the following seven statements utilizing a Likert scale, where 1=Disagree, 2=Neutral and 3=Agree:

1. I prefer my remote courses as they are very structured with set due dates similar to face-to-face courses (Q1).
2. Remote classes help me comprehend the course materials compared to Classroom learning (Q2).
3. The online environment makes it easier for me to communicate with my instructor than in a classroom environment (Q3).
4. I am more comfortable responding to questions by email/WhatsApp than orally (Q4).
5. My technical skills (email/internet apps) have increased since attending remote classes (Q5).+
6. I spend more time on my homework in comparison with regular classroom learning (Q6).+
7. The instructor understands the online environment and makes it easy for students (Q7).+

Data Analysis

For the survey analysis it was employed the statistical software R 4.2.1 (<https://www.r-project.org/>) with the following packages: (1) Likert, version 1.3.5 (Bryer & Speerschneider, 2016) for Likert Item Analysis and Visualization; (2) psych, version 1.8.12 (Revelle, 2018) for internal consistency statistics; and (3) lavaan, version 0.6-10 (Rosseel, 2012) for confirmatory factor analyses (CFA).

The 7-item instrument's statistics were estimated and presented through bar charts. Cronbach's alpha (α) and MacDonald's Omega (ω) indices gauged instrument consistency. (CFA) verified a hypothetical model with one latent variable and 7 observed variables. Fit indices included Chi-square statistic (χ^2), Chi-square degree of freedom (ν), χ^2/ν , Tucker-Lewis's index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and item factor loadings (>0.40). CFI and TLI ≥ 0.90 indicated good model fit (≥ 0.95 , excellent), while SRMR and RMSEA ≤ 0.08 and 0.06 indicated acceptable and excellent fits respectively.

Multigroup CFA (MG-CFA) tested measurement parameter invariance following experts' suggestions. Configurational invariance (Model 1), metric invariance (Model 2), and scalar invariance (Model 3) were assessed. Latent means were compared to explore scalar invariance. Partial invariance was considered in the absence of total invariance. $\Delta\chi^2$, ΔCFI , ΔTLI , $\Delta SRMR$, and $\Delta RMSEA$ guided invariance evaluation ($\Delta CFI \leq 0.01$, $\Delta TLI \leq 0.01$, $\Delta SRMR \leq 0.015$, $\Delta RMSEA \leq 0.015$). Non-significant $\Delta\chi^2$ (P-value > 0.05) indicated equivalent models between groups.

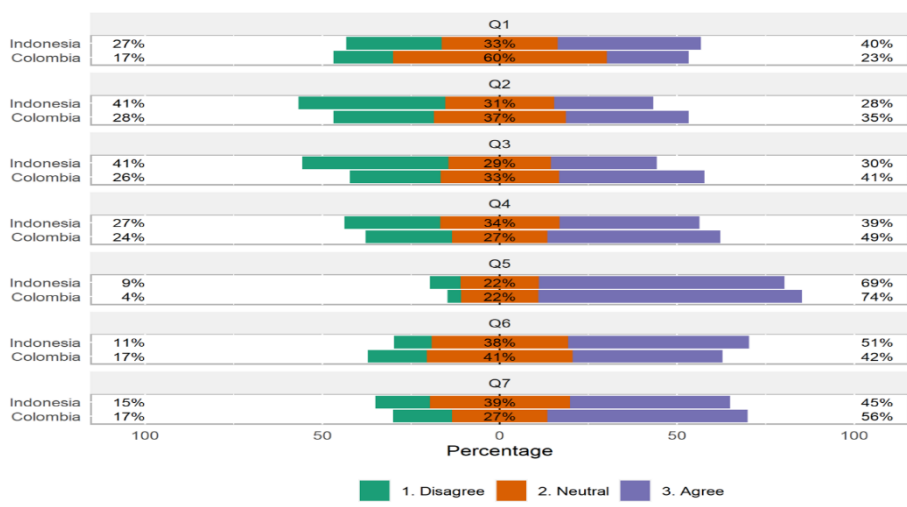
The focus groups answers were coded and then their frequencies were analyzed statistically. In the same way, the survey results were shown as numerical codes and percentages.

In the first stage, it was taken into consideration that direct content analysis aims to validate or extend theoretical frameworks. It predicts variables' relationships, aiding in forming initial coding schemes and as a standard practice, data extracted from focus groups are segmented into units of meaning, commonly referred to as codes, which may consist of one or two words (Langegård et al, 2021; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). Researchers identify initial coding categories from key concepts or variables. If the research involves identifying and categorizing emotional reactions, as in students' perceptions, researchers might highlight text segments representing emotional reactions before establishing codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). By the end of this stage, themes and sub-themes were obtained from the data. This content analysis focuses on language's communicative attributes, considering contextual meaning. Data were coded, themes identified, and information organized accordingly (Byrne, 2022; Kondracki & Wellman, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Tesch, 1990).

4. Results

According to the survey, Colombian and Indonesian students generally view emergency remote learning as positive or neutral, rather than negative as we can see below.

Figure 2. Comparative Analysis between Colombia and Indonesia students' perceptions: survey results



The first question reflects students' preferences for emergency remote EFL learning. Specifically, 27% of Indonesian students found structured schedules similar to face-to-face classes less preferable, whereas 17% of Colombian students disagreed with the structure of face-to-face learning in the context of emergency remote EFL courses. Moreover, 33% of Indonesian students and 60% of Colombian students did not have strong preferences. Additionally, 40% of Indonesian students favored the structured approach of emergency remote EFL learning, compared to 23% of Colombian students who preferred the structure of face-to-face courses.

The second question addressed students' comprehension of course materials. About 41% of Indonesian students and 28% of Colombian students felt that emergency remote EFL classes did not aid in understanding course materials, as compared to regular classroom learning. Conversely, 31% of Indonesian students and 37% of Colombian students saw little change in their comprehension between the two modes. Furthermore, 28% of Indonesian students and 35% of Colombian students agreed that emergency remote EFL classes enhanced their understanding of the materials.

Regarding online communication (third question), 41% of Indonesian students and 26% of Colombian students did not find the remote EFL learning environment more conducive to communication than in-class settings. Conversely, 29% of Indonesian students and 33% of Colombian students saw no significant difference in communication with tutors. Additionally, 30% of Indonesian students and 41% of Colombian students found communication with tutors easier in the remote environment.

Question four explored class comfort. Notably, 27% of Indonesian students and 24% of Colombian students were uncomfortable responding to questions via email or WhatsApp instead of orally. On the other hand, 34% of Indonesian students and 27% of Colombian students observed minimal differences between email/WhatsApp and oral responses. Meanwhile, 39% of Indonesian students and 49% of Colombian students felt more comfortable responding via email/WhatsApp.

The fifth question delved into technical skills. A small portion (9% of Indonesian and 4% of Colombian students) believed their technical skills didn't improve during emergency remote EFL classes. Neutral responses were given by 22% of Indonesian and 22% of Colombian students. Conversely, 69% of Indonesian students and 74% of Colombian students reported a considerable improvement in their technical skills.

In terms of time spent on homework (sixth question), 11% of Indonesian and 17% of Colombian students did not increase their homework time in remote classes. Approximately 38% of Indonesian students and 41% of Colombian students held neutral positions. However, 51% of Indonesian students and 42% of Colombian students invested more time in homework for emergency remote EFL classes.

The seventh question addressed instructors' understanding. Roughly 15% of Indonesian and 17% of Colombian students believed instructors did not grasp the remote EFL learning environment. Alternatively, 39% of Indonesian students and 27% of Colombian students noticed no change. In contrast, 45% of Indonesian students and 56% of Colombian students felt their instructors understood the environment well.

Overall, the Indonesian and Colombian students' perceptions of emergency remote EFL learning diverged in various survey questions, such as preferences, comfort, and instructor understanding. However, commonalities were seen in their understanding of course materials, technical skill usage, homework time, and communication. Thus, the survey highlighted that emergency remote learning impacted students' perceptions differently across universities and influenced their interaction with digital tools.

However, upon closer examination, we identified slightly more negative codes (23) compared to positive ones (21) in the focus groups. Negative points included difficulties in communication, focus, and connectivity. Conversely, positives such as increased tech familiarity, improved digital tool usage, better control over language skill development, and effective time and communication use emerged as significant in shaping the impact of remote English learning on both education and emotions.

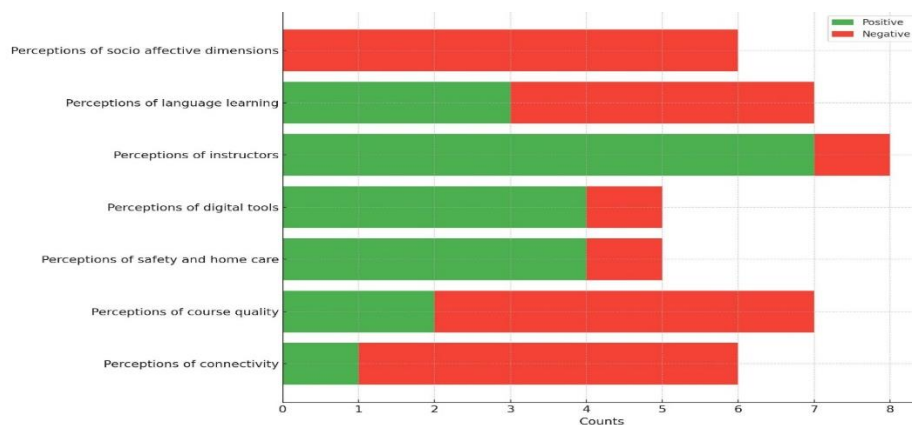
The table below illustrates the POSTOL scale regarding Social Presence and its relationships with instructional design. This latter category is further classified into positive and negative feedback obtained from the focus groups.

Table 3. Student Perceptions on Emergency Remote Instruction a POSTOL Scale analysis

Category	Positive Feedback	%	Negative Feedback	%
Transition to Remote Instruction	- Online classes keep us safe	5.88	- No adaptation to remote classes	5.26
	- More time with families	5.88	- Distractions and interruptions at home	10.53
Technology & Connectivity	- Raise technology awareness	17.65	- Gigas/Internet connection support missing	28.57
Learning Experience	- Become more creative	23.53	- Learning becomes stiff	12.50
Social Interaction & Engagement	- I am free to repeat audios (listening)	25.00	- Lack of socialization	15.7

To complement this, figure 3 categorizes perceptions into positive, negative, and neutral codes across various themes related to remote EFL courses, providing a broad overview of student types of perceptions as seen below.

Figure 3. Focus groups content coding of types of perceptions of EFL remote courses in Colombia and Indonesia

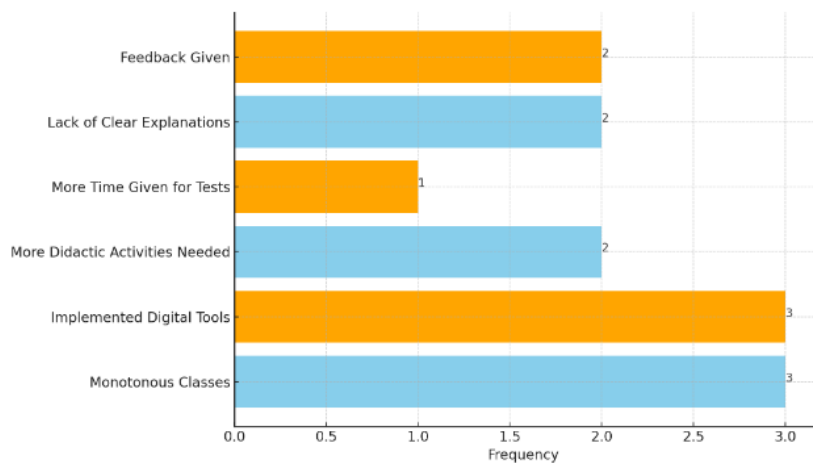


Considering the first sub question, in the context of emergency remote EFL learning, students' perceptions of their teachers' effectiveness played a pivotal role in shaping the overall learning experience. The positive aspects of this perception were multifaceted. Firstly, the integration of digital tools into the learning environment was warmly received by students. These tools not only fostered engagement but also facilitated interactive and dynamic language learning experiences. Additionally, students appreciated instructors who demonstrated adept remote course management skills. This ability ensured that classes ran smoothly and effectively, contributing to a sense of structure and organization within the virtual classroom. Furthermore, the provision of extended time for tests and the consistent delivery of constructive feedback underscored instructors' commitment to student success.

Constant monitoring of student progress, coupled with a proactive approach to addressing individual wants and needs, contributed to a supportive and personalized learning environment. Engaging teaching methods, designed to captivate students' attention and maintain their interest, were also recognized as a positive influence. Encouraging active participation through breakout group activities further enhanced the learning experience. Nevertheless, amid these favorable perceptions, a noteworthy negative aspect surfaced. Some students expressed dissatisfaction with classes characterized by unclear explanations and monotony. This observation underscored the importance of maintaining clarity and variety in instruction, even in remote EFL learning, to ensure a comprehensive and engaging educational experience.

In the next analysis, figure 4 below presents the different categories of the OIRBS scale concerning instructor characteristics and the frequency of occurrence in the focus groups content analysis.

Figure 4. Students' perception of the teacher's emergency remote instruction: An OIRBS Scale Analysis of focus groups

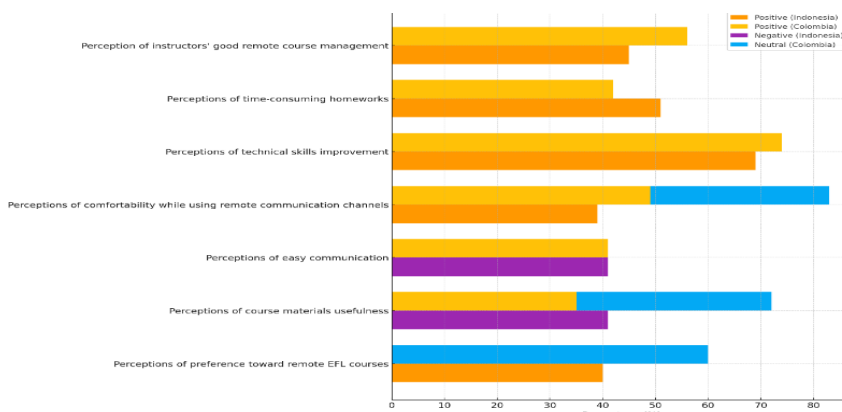


This figure presents the results of sub question 1, an insightful evaluation of instructors' characteristics during the transition to emergency remote instruction through the lens of the OIRBS scale, revealing key aspects of their performance. The data highlights several areas

where instructors excelled or faced challenges: notable strengths included the implementation of digital tools, suggesting a proactive approach to integrating technology into teaching. However, there were also areas identified for improvement, such as the need for more didactic activities and clearer explanations, each cited twice. Additionally, the table reflects on instructors' roles as course designers and organizers, technology facilitators, assessment designers, social supporters, and discussion facilitators, with feedback varying from the appreciation of efforts to keep students engaged and monitored to critiques on the monotony of classes and a lack of varied activities. This nuanced feedback underscores the multifaceted roles instructors played during a pivotal shift in educational delivery, highlighting both their adaptability and areas for further development in remote learning environments.

For the second sub question, the figure below compares Indonesian and Colombian students' perceptions of emergency remote EFL learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students completed both a seven-question survey and focus groups to gauge their perceptions of using digital tools in relation to course structure and materials, communication, technical skills, remote workload, and instructors. Figure 5 illustrates how different and similar perceptions are in both countries.

Figure 5. Summary of themes and types of perceptions of EFL remote courses in Colombia and Indonesia



Psychometric analysis

Internal consistency was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and McDonald's Omega (ω). It was found that globally Cronbach's Alpha and McDonald's Omega have values above 0.6 ($\alpha=0.68$, $\omega=0.69$). For the data in Colombia, $\alpha=0.64$, $\omega=0.68$; and for the data in Indonesia, $\alpha=0.71$, $\omega=0.72$. In general, the values found are within the range allowed by the scientific community (being greater than 0.6).

Multigroup confirmatory factor analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis was used to evaluate the fit of a single factor model for the instrument. Based on the results obtained (Table 5), we conclude that the fit of this model was satisfactory. In order to ensure comparability between groups, no correlated error terms were allowed in the measurement invariance test of the model. The configurational model (Model 1) presented an adequate overall fit, indicating that configurational invariance could be

confirmed. Subsequently, the constraint of equality in factor loadings was imposed (Model 2). Since $\Delta\chi^2=11.6$, $\Delta df=6$, $P\text{-value}=0.07>0.05$, the hypothesis that Models 1 and 2 are equivalent is not rejected (here: Δ stands for "difference"; χ^2 is the chi-squared statistic and df are the corresponding degrees of freedom). Therefore, we can proceed with strong/scalar invariance (Model 3). Considering that the change in the chi-square value between Model 2 and the restricted Model (Model 3) is not significant ($\Delta\chi^2=0.81$, $\Delta df=6$, $P\text{-value}=0.99>0.05$), scalar invariance is not rejected.

Table 4. Invariance model metrics

Model	chisq	df	pvalue	cfi	rmsea	tli	srmr	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	P-value
0. One factor	20.15	14	0.125	0.97	0.049	0.96	0.08			
1. Configural	39.88	28	0.068	0.96	0.069	0.93	0.11			
2. Weak/loading	57.27	34	0.008	0.91	0.087	0.89	0.12	11.6	6	0.07
3. Strong/scalar invariance	57.42	40	0.037	0.94	0.07	0.93	0.11	0.81	6	0.99

Since the latent variables have not been directly observed, there is no implicit scale for them. Therefore, a comparison between the means of the factors can only be made considering the groups according to country. Thus, only the differences between the latent means (mean estimate) of the groups can be explained as described below. First, it is important to note that the R statistical program has taken Colombia as the reference group and has set its mean to zero. Therefore, we have the following relationship:

$$\text{Mean Estimate} = \text{Mean (Indonesia)} - \text{Mean (Colombia)} = \text{Mean (Indonesia)} - 0 = \text{Mean (Indonesia)}.$$

Given that the estimate of the Mean is -0.244, the Standard error is 0.146, the Z-value is -1.664 and the P-value is $0.096>0.05$, it is concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between the population means of the latent factors of Indonesia and Colombia. Observing the negative value of the Mean estimate, we can state that, on average, the people sampled in Colombia score better than those in Indonesia (the average score of Colombians is 0.02 units higher than the score of Indonesians). However, according to the P-value obtained (higher than 0.05), we conclude that this difference is not significant at the population level and does not vary by country.

4. Discussion

Research question 1

Research question 1 involved the perceptions of Colombian and Indonesian students regarding emergency remote EFL courses. The results indicate that most students hold favorable or neutral perceptions of remote learning, with a slight predominance of positive and neutral views. The content analysis revealed more negative categories than positive ones, with notable issues including connectivity challenges, concentration difficulties, and limited social interactions. However, the positive impact of technology awareness, digital tool proficiency, language skill control, and efficient communication use was also evident, enhancing both pedagogical and socio-affective aspects. It is also relevant that the focus group reveals a few neutral codes or answers from participants.

The prevalence of negative perceptions might be linked to the global South governments' limited response to student needs during the pandemic. Connectivity issues were highlighted, stemming from geographical factors and the cost of data and devices, exacerbating feelings of isolation, disinterest, and concentration problems. These findings are in line with the studies of Moorhouse and Kohnke (2021) and Kamble et al. (2021) reflecting the impact of technological skills and connectivity gaps, which disproportionately affect global South contexts.

While some studies underline students' negative perceptions regarding technologies and connectivity, it is important to cite challenges found in virtual environments and its impact on learning motivation and digital competence (Blizak et al., 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020), which highlight new areas for research exploration on new forms of communicating in class and students' resilience (Lee et al., 2021).

Besides, the lack of socialization emerged as a significant hindrance in both countries' remote EFL learning experiences. This is consistent with Pardeer Kumar et al. (2021) and Lemay et al. (2021) who emphasize the focus on continuous learning over social interactions in online settings. The pandemic exposed the potential of remote learning but neglected its socio-affective dimension, which is vital for students' emotional well-being (Meishar-Tal & Levenberg, 2021). In fact, it has been reported that Indonesian university students have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in notable repercussions on their mental, spiritual, and physical well-being (Karuniawati et al., 2022; Defina & Rizkillah, 2021). The shift to remote learning has created challenges, causing increased student anxiety and dissatisfaction, especially regarding completing academic tasks at home (Aristovnik et al., 2020).

Concurrently, scholarly investigations by Ardan, Rahman, and Geroda (2020) have elucidated that the prevalence of anxiety among university students stands at 40.3%. Similarly, findings from Romadhona et al. (2021) underscore the substantial psychological burden borne by students during the pandemic. In their study encompassing a cohort of 258 college students, results revealed a prevalence of moderate depression in 12.8% of participants, very severe anxiety in 20.9%, and severe stress in 13.6%. This emphasizes the vital role of community, family, and institutional support in encouraging physical distancing compliance and reducing students' psychological distress.

Similar patterns of contrast in perceptions have been observed in other countries, such as Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. Despite positive aspects like self-study benefits and affordability, remote learning was critiqued for its inability to replace in-person interaction, mitigate distractions, manage workload, and ensure data privacy and security (Almahasees et al., 2021; Hussein et al., 2020) which led participants evoke a range of emotional responses, including frustration, anxiety, disappointment, concern, and loneliness, among others.

In Western countries, negative perceptions were also compounded by issues like network instability, one-sided interactions, and difficulty concentrating (Shim & Lee, 2020). Research emphasizes a wide range of combined technological, instructional, social, and affective obstacles in various educational contexts, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Remote learning often results in a strong affective component, leading to frustration, decreased accountability, and engagement (Lemay et al., 2021; Michel et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2021).

Interpersonal disconnections and perceived loneliness significantly impact perceptions of remote teaching (Kaufmann & Vallade, 2020). Ecuadorian undergraduates, for instance, expressed negativity toward digital English classes due to a lack of socialization (Estrella, 2021) which may be a significant factor contributing to their unfavorable view of this mode of learning. This highlights the importance of considering socialization aspects when designing and implementing EFL classes in these environments.

On the other hand, positive perceptions centered on increased technology awareness, better digital tool management, enhanced listening skill control, and communication flexibility. The remote EFL environment fostered creativity, motivation, and technology proficiency, enriching both language skills and technological competence. The availability of diverse resources anytime, anywhere was beneficial, promoting a sense of control over the learning pace.

Sub-Research Question 2

Sub-research question 2 involved the students' perception of the teacher's emergency remote instruction. The survey results indicated that there were merely positive perceptions regarding instructors' remote course management. Focus group findings highlighted positive responses to digital tool implementation, extended test time, ongoing feedback, and learning monitoring. However, participants noted a single negative aspect: lack of understanding.

In here, both Indonesia and Colombia encountered challenges in sub-skills such as grammar during remote EFL courses, highlighting a need for face-to-face scaffolding and direct support from teachers. Similar situations were reported by other studies conducted in tertiary levels in which students claimed that insufficient feedback, the lack of natural environments to practice and the inability to ask questions directly and receive immediate answers are the factors that affect grammar acquisition in online and remote contexts (Farneste & Apse, 2021; Pinto-Llorente et al, 2017).

Sub-research Question 3

Sub-research question 3 addressed the differences and similarities between Colombian and Indonesian students' perceptions in emergency remote EFL learning. We could observe that similarities outweighed differences. Indonesian students exhibited a more positive perception of the remote EFL course structure, possibly due to its similarity to face-to-face classes, aiding their transition which contrasts other Indonesian studies such as Nugroho and Atmojo (2020) who found that students in an English course held negative attitudes towards online learning (82%) and disliked online lectures (83%). Similarly, Agung et al. (2020) reported negative perceptions of online learning (66.7%) and mobile phone use (84.8%) among English Language Education Program students due to unreliable Internet access (41%) (Rifiyanti, 2020). In Jakarta, EFL undergraduates had positive experiences with only four of ten popular online learning apps (Hendrawaty et al., 2021).

The synthesis of the data analysis coupled with diverse perceptions, suggests that online resources may not effectively substitute for in-person class time (Siegelman, 2019; Singh et al., 2021). Consequently, blended learning emerges as a potential solution to mitigate the drawbacks of online education and facilitate a smoother assimilation of content in both online and remote learning settings. Furthermore, the instructional strategies behind it ought to be

culturally responsive, recognizing the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on historically marginalized communities (Crosby et al., 2020; Sherwood et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

In summary, this study provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities presented by emergency remote EFL learning, offering a comparative perspective on shared concerns across geographically distant countries. The examination of 'emergency' remote learning experiences across continents underscores its significance, considering distinct contextual characteristics while identifying issues that transcend geographical boundaries. The study's findings shed light on how students in the global South perceive emergency remote EFL learning and its impact on their educational experiences, revealing a nuanced landscape characterized by both demands and benefits.

Most of the students in the sample hold favorable or neutral perceptions of emergency remote EFL learning, with a slight prevalence of positive and neutral attitudes over negative ones, suggesting adaptability to this mode of instruction. Nevertheless, notable negative perceptions among students encompass challenges related to connectivity issues, difficulties in maintaining concentration, and limitations in social interactions, highlighting the profound impact of emotional and socioeconomic factors on remote learning experiences. Crucially, the methodological robustness of the study, as evidenced by quantitative data analysis from focus groups and surveys, serve to affirm the reliability and comparability of the data gathered from Colombian and Indonesian students. This validation facilitated triangulation, enabling a more comprehensive grasp of the subject matter at hand.

The study also outlines transformative potential in positive factors such as enhanced technology awareness, proficiency in digital tools, improved language skills, and efficient communication practices. However, it emphasizes the substantial impediment posed by the dearth of socialization in remote EFL learning, highlighting the need to foster meaningful social connections in remote learning environments.

Through the analysis of the perceptions held by Indonesian and Colombian students, the study also delineated both areas of convergence and divergence. While Indonesian students exhibit a more favorable perception of remote EFL course structure, both countries face common challenges in specific sub-skills such as grammar, suggesting the need for additional support. The study underscores the significance of blended learning approaches, emphasizing that online resources should complement rather than replace in-person instruction for a smoother learning experience.

In conclusion, this study illuminates the intricate landscape of student perceptions of emergency remote EFL learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need to address connectivity, socialization, and technology integration issues. Future research should explore correlations between economic backgrounds, social disparities, and remote EFL learning perceptions, and devise strategies for designing resilient courses. Additionally, innovative methods for embedding social interaction into online learning environments should be investigated. Emphasis on culturally responsive instructional strategies, acknowledgment of mental health requirements, and restoration of safety are crucial. Finally, analyzing

perceptions can guide policymakers and educators in enhancing the quality of remote EFL education, fostering connections with countries facing similar conditions.

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