

***The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on teaching and learning Business
English: Face-to-face, online or both?***

Andrea Ruiz Cirlot
Pompeu Fabra University
ardc92@gmail.com

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Abstract: This paper explores the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the effectiveness of face-to-face, online and the combination of both modalities in the teaching and learning of Business English, which is a discipline included in the English for Specific Purposes approach, known by its acronym ESP. In order to determine the differences between these two modalities, I created a questionnaire to gather information from fourth-year undergraduate students of Business Administration and Management from the University of Barcelona, and also from teachers who have taught Business English and other modes of English language teaching. This research analyzes the benefits and pitfalls of traditional and virtual classrooms, and emphasizes that the meeting of these two modalities affects not only student-teacher communication but also the performance of exams, tasks, oral presentations and practical exercises. The results of the questionnaire may elucidate whether the two modalities are compatible and to what extent merging them will enhance teachers' performance and will strengthen learners' knowledge of the target language.

Keywords: Business English, face-to-face teaching, online learning.

Introduction

This paper is framed within the research line of Language Teaching and Language Learning, and investigates the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the effectiveness of face-to-face, online, and the combination of both modalities in the teaching and learning of Business English. The data collection of this research consists of a questionnaire, which was conducted with fourth-year undergraduate students of Business Administration and Management from the University of

Barcelona and for teachers that give lessons of English at different universities of Barcelona. Some researchers have already investigated this topic from other perspectives by exploring the effects of the pandemic on the teaching of Business English at a Romanian University (Alexa, 2020); by comparing the results of the students in both face-to-face and online lessons at the University of Prague (Kuřirková, Kučera and Vostrá, 2012); by analyzing students' satisfaction with a traditional and a virtual Business English course in a university setting (Tratnik, Urh and Jereb, 2019); by pointing out both the benefits and pitfalls of e-learning models and the progress of an e-learning model for Business English (Tratnik and Jereb, 2013); by finding out the students' opinions about a virtual course of Business English (Kuřirková and Jarkovská, 2016); by considering students' recommendations for online Business English learning (Dimeski, 2021); and by researching into the teaching of Business English through the Moodle platform, and specifically the creation of assignments and tests (Horea and Abrudan, 2021). This paper's contribution to this research theme is the analysis of the different opinions of both teachers and students on the effectiveness of traditional and virtual courses of English during the Covid-19 pandemic, and is divided into the following sections: Research Questions and Hypotheses; Literature Review (theoretical exploration of the research topic); Research Method (research context, design, sample and instrument); Results and Discussion (analysis of the questionnaire); Conclusions; References; a Webgraphy; and an Appendix.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research explores the following questions:

- a) How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the teaching and learning of Business English?
- b) How has this transformation from a traditional to a virtual lesson affected both student and teacher performance?
- c) Is a fusion of the face-to-face and online modalities of teaching and learning possible?

This paper argues that the Covid-19 pandemic has offered a unique opportunity to put online teaching and learning to the test, which, of course, cannot replace face-to-face teaching and learning, but does have several important benefits. Technology allows us to increase the interaction between the students and the teacher, which, arguably, is a fundamental objective of today's learning and teaching.

Literature Review

Background information for the impact of Covid-19 on both teaching and learning

The Covid-19 pandemic caused “a massive increase in online teaching as [all] educational institutions shifted from traditional learning to [e-learning]” (Dimeski, 2021, p.1). Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic caused a major transformation in teaching and learning methods, consisting mainly of online instruction, meaning that only virtual interaction would be possible and physical

presence would not due to the highly infectious character of the virus. Online education has led to an exploration of the different digital media or applications of videoconferencing available, which we were practically unaware of “such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams. Besides these tools for direct - live communication, most universities [have been using since 2002], intensively and extensively, the e-learning platform [known as] Moodle” (Horea and Abrudan, 2021, p.474).

Since March 2020, the British Council has organized several debates between education specialists in order to share “their own experience[s] with the new [modality] of teaching [and learning (online)]” (Alexa, 2020, p.124). On June 24th 2020, a webinar was conducted around three questions. The first one consisted of asking teachers about the challenges of the pandemic’s beginning and the results were: “having to work longer hours, utilizing technology effectively, not feeling so connected to students, dealing with the challenges of working from home, insufficient support from institutions and feeling isolated from colleagues” (Etherton, 2020, quoted in Alexa, 2020, p.125). The second question inquired into the preference of face-to-face teaching over the online modality, and participants stated that to “use some of the ways we are working now combined with how we worked in the past was a much better way and [we] like how things are now” (Etherton, 2020, quoted in Alexa, 2020, p.125). The final, third question asked about “the area in which staff would like more support from their institutions” (Etherton, 2020, quoted in Alexa, 2020, p.125) and the answers ranged from “much clearer policy and expectation regarding student engagement, more structured interaction with colleagues to be able to share best practice and insure knowledge transfer, better technology, better equipment [to] more accessible counseling” (Etherton, 2020, quoted in Alexa, 2020, p.125).

It has been claimed that although “the year 2020 may not have started on the right foot, (...yet) education professionals worldwide recognize the pandemic as both a challenge and an opportunity to implement what has been discussed for a while in terms of e-learning possibilities” (Alexa, 2020, p.129). This means that the Covid-19 pandemic will not halt students’ progress but will provide other benefits that will strengthen their knowledge of the target language even in this time of inclusion.

Face-to-Face vs Online Teaching and Learning

As we all know, what distinguishes traditional learning from e-learning is that the former involves physical interaction between students-teachers in the classroom and the latter implies virtual interaction between students-teachers through a screen. Online courses have grown due to the influence of technological advances and globalization. According to Geary (2012), these types of courses “are radically different from other content areas, in which students gain new skills through first language experience” (quoted in Yunhadi, Armadi and Sudrajat, 2020, p.117). As specified by the researchers, “traditional education has lost some of its educational force, it is now the new technologies that govern our society and education, and represent an indispensable attribute of teaching and learning process” (Tratnik and Jereb, 2013, p.50); nevertheless, I consider that this is only partially true because, although the impact of Covid-19 entailed a change from traditional to virtual classrooms, the use of technological advances is developed in both settings.

With regards to virtual lessons, we must understand what we mean when we talk about online learning, which is also known as e-learning. E-learning has been defined as an educational method of instruction that includes the use of technological devices and resources in the classroom. According to Frydrychová Klímová (2006), “computers and new technologies [have] become an important aspect of foreign language learning” (quoted in (Kuçirková & Kuçerá & Vostrá, 2012, p.175). Regarding the methodology of e-learning, we must pay attention to Fedyunina (2006)’s following criteria: Engaging learners in the learning process; Encouraging independent learning skills; Developing learners’ skills; and motivating learners (quoted in Kuçirková & Kuçerá & Vostrá, 2012, p.175).

Moreover, some researchers suggested top five elements that must be taken into account when facing online classes, and these elements are (Güven, 2020, quoted in Alexa, 2020, p.126):

1. The teaching and learning environment. For virtual lessons, we will use the Moodle online platform for learning and teaching, the Zoom or Skype online video conferencing platforms; and Whatsapp, the online instant messaging platform. At the University of Barcelona, BbCollaborate was used as an application for a virtual classroom that both students and teachers logged into through Moodle.
2. Curriculum and teaching materials by using Moodle to provide students with material and course-based assessment assignments.
3. Assessment through Moodle, where students will answer a quiz, a type of test that includes multiple choice questions, true/false questions and essay-type questions to write a maximum of 250 words, and students will use Zoom to deliver their oral presentations.
4. Delivery of online lessons. Some teachers prefer Zoom or Skype, but other uses Microsoft Teams and other platforms (such as Google Meet or BbCollaborate) to deliver the lessons. Nevertheless, Zoom has been considered “the most popular platform because it seemed to work better for everyone in terms of accessibility, video quality and ease of use. [However], it did not provide the opportunity to share documents, create assignments or evaluate students” (Alexa, 2020, p.126). On the other hand, Moodle can be used to assess students’ assignments and through this platform teachers can provide materials for students. Access to resources: both Moodle and Zoom can be accessed either through a computer or through a mobile phone, but because of the connection speed to the Internet, it is easier for students through the phone rather than the computer (Alexa, 2020, p.128).

Digital tools, and more specifically online platforms (among which we can find Moodle), can “serve as specific media for implementation of the learning process” (Brenton, 2009, quoted in Tratnik and Jereb, 2013, p.51). Furthermore, Moodle should be discussed as the best-known online educational platform, which is used by both teachers and students from institutes, colleges and universities all over the world since 2002. Moodle has been used by several researchers from different perspectives: As a tool that helps to create usable activities (Stanford, 2009); As a platform that provides activities like—Forums, Chat, Wiki, Assignments, Glossary and Games (Bird, 2010); As a multi-functional platform that enhances students’ learning (Suksan and Nutrapha, 2010); and 4. As a platform designed for electronic courses, which are ideal for blended learning (fusion of face-to-face and online modalities) (Alkina et al., 2015) (quoted in Horea and Abrudan, 2021, p.474).

Apart from all previously mentioned, traditional classrooms offer real interaction between students and teachers and can strengthen learners' motivation as they are surrounded by their classmates. Conversely, virtual classrooms can reinforce "autonomous learning, the ability to support independence in learning as well as enhancement of interactivity, variety and flexibility" (Tratnik and Jereb, 2013, p.51). Moreover, "the introduction of computers into the teaching and learning [settings will allow] teachers a more personal control of student goals and learning objectives in addition to large group instruction" (Garrison, 2011, quoted in Tratnik and Jereb, 2013, p.51). However, although technological devices provide many different sources that students can use to improve their learning skills, these tools (such as computers and tablets, amongst others) can cause student distraction as they can use the Internet for personal rather than study purposes.

Research Method

For this research, a mixed-method approach has been used as it combines both quantitative and qualitative analysis, and so obtains a wider variety of responses. In a questionnaire, the tool for data collection of this paper, there are questions that are analyzed quantitatively (numerical data obtained through graphs in the questionnaire that contain items in a Likert scale, in which participants indicate if they agree or disagree with the statement) and there are others, known as open-ended questions that are analyzed qualitatively, related to the content of the main topic of research. Thus, from the questionnaire, the percentages of each answer are analyzed quantitatively and the opinions given by both teachers and students are analyzed qualitatively. (Dörnyei, 2007, p.24).

Research Context: English for Specific Purposes

Business is one of the disciplines included in the English for Specific Purposes (known by its acronym ESP) approach. ESP has been defined, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), as "an [educational] approach to language learning [and teaching that] is based on learners' needs" (quoted in Rahman, 2015, p.25). This definition can be merged with other definitions proposed by other linguists such as Dudley Evans and St John (1998); on the other hand, some researchers labelled ESP as "the teaching of English used in academic studies, or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes" (Anthony, 1997, p.116).

Before explaining what our Business English Course consists of, it is important to be aware of the term Business, especially in its relationship with English. Business English (known by its acronym BE) belongs to ESP because it is a specialized course on technical vocabulary for concrete types of learners who will end up working for companies. In addition, according to Alibec (2014), the main tips for BE are: 1. Find out what your [learners] want to achieve; 2. Get a clear idea about the contexts in which learners use English; 3. Be business-like but keep energy levels high; 4. Choose your materials wisely (Alibec, 2014, p.60). The first tip makes reference to the learners' needs; the second one is linked with the appropriate use of the target language (in this case English) in relation to the content (context: Business, different units or topics connected to companies such

as Human Resources, Advertising, Finance, etc); the third one refers to learners achieving a professional level in both linguistic features, skills and professional genres; and the fourth one is related to the usage of real-life materials that learners can take advantage of for their future jobs. Secondly and in connection with these authentic resources, Alibec emphasizes that they must be updated to our current times, to the technological world that we are living in. Alibec classifies them for teaching BE into: TV and radio commercials, interviews, the news, reality or other shows, films, documentaries, video clips, presentations, lectures, Internet, etc. (Alibec, 2014: 60). However, Business English textbooks can also be considered authentic materials because they include simulated company situations known as Case Studies, exercises of skills, language focus, reading comprehension and vocabulary of the unit related to the discipline.

Design of an English-for-Business Course for both Face-to-Face and Online Classes

In developing an English-for-Business course, one has to take into consideration the tools that are needed for both a traditional and a virtual classroom. The course consists of twelve units, divided into three thematic blocks that each include 4 units and each unit covers different topics (for instance, Branding, Advertising, Human Resources, Finance, amongst others). All units are structured in a similar way, focusing on developing theoretical skills (based on Business content related topics) and language skills (grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening and speaking). This course is designed for the intended learning outcomes (included in the Teaching Plan-Syllabus) of the optional English for Business course at the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Barcelona. The participants are intermediate-level (B2 from the Common European Framework of Reference) fourth-year undergraduate students enrolled in the Degree of Business Administration and Management. For this course, students are required to complete different types of assignments, known as tasks, for example complete Moodle quizzes as practical exercises that contain language skills from the classes, case studies: real-life scenarios that combine oral and written skills. They are professional genres that are known as: formal email, press release, action minutes, summary of negotiation, graphs analysis, commercials' grid, among others. For their oral presentation, students choose a topic from a list provided by the teacher; the key material used for this course is the classroom book by David Cotton, David Falvey & Simon Kent, *Market Leader Intermediate* (2010).

With regards to the face-to-face class, one should highlight its range of essential factors: use of the Virtual Campus (Moodle) functions such as Quizzes or other different resources (documents, powerpoints, etc.); use of screen projector (computer from classroom); use of pen blackboard; use of chairs and tables—sitting and interacting in groups or pairs. As to online classes, one should highlight the following essential factors: the use of BbCollaborate or Zoom as platforms that can help to interact in the classroom virtually through different functions: the whiteboard is similar to the current blackboard of a classroom; the share screen can be used to share powerpoints or other resources; breakout groups are useful for collaborative tasks; the microphone is used for participation and the camera is used to see faces; the chat tool allows to share the answers of the exercises; and the recording session is a tool to review and check back what has been taught .

Benefits and pitfalls of both face-to-face and online modalities of Business English

Both traditional and virtual face-to-face classrooms have benefits and pitfalls. On the one hand, the face-to-face modality can facilitate direct contact between teachers and students and among students. Moreover, this type of learning provides instant feedback and communication, which means that doubts can be solved easily and immediately in the classroom. Teachers can pay more attention to the students' personal circumstances by helping them with their difficulties with regards to the level or general knowledge of the target language. On the other hand, traditional classrooms do not have flexible timetables as they are organized by the institutions (school, university, amongst others). Students have to move from their houses to the place where they study, so there is a waste of time going walking and there is a cost of transport (either private or public). Furthermore, students can get distracted easily from the surroundings of the school and sometimes moving from one class to another can create a loss of time.

In contrast, virtual classrooms have been considered a good option for undergraduate students to choose to study, but they also have benefits and pitfalls. On the one hand, online learning can enhance the use of technological resources (Moodle, Virtual Campus, BbCollaborate, Zoom) as students have instant access to Wifi and, therefore, to the Internet. In addition, e-learning means being able to study from home, so you can save money on transport, and you can have more comfort (you can attend the class from wherever you want, schedules may be more flexible than in a traditional one as you can join the platform whenever you consider without interrupting the session). On the other hand, online classrooms can cause a lot of distraction as you are surrounded by home appliances or other resources (mobile, video games...), so teachers do not have much control over the students as they are not physically together (in the same place). Also, both students and teachers can feel alienated as they are not with their colleagues, so there will be lack of motivation but less stress.

Sample

A total of 114 participants were interviewed, both students and teachers, with the aim of determining how effective face-to-face, online or the combination of both modalities is for the teaching and learning of English at university level. A total of 47 answered the survey from September to December 2021, 39 were students and 8 were teachers, who have experienced the three types of modalities (traditional, virtual and blended). From February to May 2022 another 14 students answered this survey, so there are in total 61 respondents.

Instrument

Students and teachers' feedback was obtained using a questionnaire. Questionnaires are described as "any written [or digital] instruments that present [participants] with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing their answers or selecting from among

existing answers” (Brown, 2001, quoted in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 102). Questionnaires are also known as surveys, forms, checklists or scales, amongst others (Dörnyei, 2007, p.102). The questionnaire is used as a research instrument to collect data on phenomena which cannot be observed, such as attitudes, self-concepts, habits, amongst others, and to obtain information about the research topics and about the participants (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990, p.172, quoted in Kuçirková and Jarkovská, 2016, p.9).

The questionnaire used for this research has been designed through Google Form, an application that can be used to create this type of survey, and an example of it can be found in the link of the Webgraphy. In addition, the survey has been conducted to fourth-year students of Business Administration and Management at the University of Barcelona, and also to some teachers who give lessons of Business English and other modes of English at different universities of Barcelona, and it is composed of only one section called “Face-to-face vs. Online classes” that is divided by eighteen questions about different issues related to learning and teaching English in traditional, virtual or blended settings. Some of these questions are only addressed to teachers, others only to students and others that affect both counterparts. Furthermore, these questions are divided into multiple-item scale and open-ended questions. The former consists of scales referring to a cluster of different word items of the same target and they are summed resulting in a total scale score. The latter consists of items that although they do not include options to choose from, they have some blank spaces (with dotted lines) for the participants to fill in (Dörnyei, 2007, p.103-104 and p.107).

Finally, the questionnaire has two sections. The purpose of the first section is asking participants to give consent so that we can collect data for this research. The second section is about experiences of both students and teachers regarding traditional and virtual classrooms, and about the different activities and skills that are performed in them.

Results and Discussion

The two studies that are more closely related to my research are Kuçirková, Kuçerá and Vostrá (2012) and Tratnik, Urh and Jereb (2019). The results of the first one have shown that the “e-learning [modality] can be considered as equally [an] efficient [modality] as face-to-face. In some cases, such as acquiring specialist vocabulary, even better. It could be offered for [both] distance students, lifelong learning centers, foreign students coming within Erasmus programme and also for academic staff” (Kuçirková & Kuçerá & Vostrá, 2012, p.183). The results of the second one have shown that “a course combining online and face-to-face elements may be better received by students than a purely online one. [Nevertheless], the online learning could be used as a supplement to and enhancement of face-to-face learning [by] (...) helping [students] to become more empowered to take control of their own learning and giving them the freedom to choose when, where and how fast they want to learn” (Tratnik, Urh and Jereb, 2019, p.43). Regarding the effectiveness of face-to-face, online or a combined version of both modalities for teaching and learning the results have shown that both students and teachers agree that the majority of factors of learning and teaching are more effective in a face-to-face classroom than in an online one. We will now see some examples of this effectiveness.

As we can see in Figure 1 (see appendix), 55.7% (including both teachers and students) answered that they prefer face-to-face classes because of the following factors: 1. Direct contact between teachers and students; 2. Direct feedback and direct rapport; 3. More interaction and dynamism in the way of teaching; 4. Less distraction by mobile phone or other electronic devices; 5. Easy to understand and follow (ask questions about topics); 6. Being more focused (you can pay attention easily); 7. Being forced to speak in front of an audience is a great challenge and opportunity to face real-life presentations. In addition, 13.1% consider online classes as their preference because of the following factors: 1. Comfort; 2. No movement (they can follow classes or teach classes at home); 3. Organize their time better, flexibility of schedule (no waste of time by moving from home to university); 4. Use of the Internet all time and use of different platforms; 5. Use of chat instead of speaking through a microphone or speaking in front of an audience; 6. Practice language at home. Besides, 31.1% prefer the combination of both modes (face-to-face and online) because of the following factors: 1. Fusion of interaction and comfort (you can interact through group work tasks or through microphone from home); 2. Dynamism and organization of time (using whiteboard or other tools in a more dynamic way and being able to adapt to timing schedule); 3. Participation (class direct through microphone or chat and in the classroom).

With regards to skills and as one can see from Figure 2 to Figure 7 (see appendix), students answered that they will learn better or that they have learned better language skills (grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading and writing) through face-to-face mode than in online, indicated by the percentages: 50.9% (grammar), 39.6% (vocabulary), 71.7% (speaking), 48.1% (listening), 30.2% (reading), 35.8% (writing). As one can see in Figure 8 (see appendix), teachers answered that teaching these skills (grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening and speaking) will be better taught through the combination of both modes (face-to-face and online), regardless of the difficulty. As regards the influence of Covid-19 over the teaching and learning of English, students commented that being forced to attend online classes (mandatory way of classes due to Covid-19) caused them lack of motivation when studying and to have to make a lot of extra effort to pay attention to teachers. In addition, they claimed that practical classes were not so useful for them through this mode as these types of classes were complicated to follow (difficulty of listening in front of a computer screen). Teachers commented that online classes are useful because they allow the use of different platforms (such as Moodle, Zoom, BbCollaborate) and can become tools of faster access to multimedia resources (for instance, quick access to files or quick use of quizzes). However, they can become tiring because of being too many hours in front of a screen forcing your eyes to watch. A positive issue of online classes is that they are a new way of learning (students need to adapt to the tools implemented in the course) or teaching (be able to use different resources to teach different skills related to the foreign language).

As we have seen in Figures 9 and 10 (see appendix), we can see a barcode graph, which shows the percentage of each factor from missing face-to-face classes or tools that can help to improve learning and teaching in an online lesson. On the one hand, the top factors missing from a face-to-face class are direct contact with students-teachers (77%) and direct contact with colleagues, classmates (83.6%). The medium factor missed is interaction in groups of classmates or colleagues while sharing the same table (60.7%). The rest of factors are under 50% and the least factor missed from a face-to-face class is: Using Virtual Campus to upload tasks (6.6%). On the other hand, the top factors to improve learning and teaching of an online class are: 1. Using Virtual Campus to upload tasks or other resources (54.1%); 2. Answering Quizzes as practical exercises (63.9%), 3.

Theoretical explanations through PowerPoint (49.2%) and 4. Attendance to BbCollaborate classroom (49.2%). The rest of the factors are under 50% with more or less the same percentage (nearly 40%).

As we can see in Figure 11 (see appendix), regarding exams, 54.1% of both teachers and students answered that the face-to-face format is the most effective for the process of doing and preparing. For students, these types of exams have physical time and you can choose to answer the questions in the order that you want; therefore, they feel more confident writing on a paper than through a quiz format. For teachers, invigilation is easy as you know exactly what students are doing while answering the exam in the classroom. Furthermore, you can get direct evidence from them and they are technically more simple to prepare. This type of exam also provides more reliable results from students' answers. Conversely, 45.9% of both teachers and students consider that the online format of exam is the most effective because you are allowed to use a computer while answering the exam, the format is clean and practical, you can have more peace and quiet to answer and you have more comfort and confidence as students are studying from home. However, you can face problems of understanding (quiz questions may not be that clear) and you have time pressure (as you have physical time to answer each part of the exam).

As we can see in Figure 12 (see appendix), regarding tasks, 49.2% of both teachers and students have answered that the most effective way of preparing or doing exercises or other assignments is through the combination of both face-to-face and online modes because of the following reasons: 1. Same format can be applied to both modes (quizzes); 2. Learning and teaching the same concepts and structures; 3. Listenings, readings and grammar exercises are good to practice in both (paper or quiz format). Moreover, 27.9% have answered that tasks must be done in face-to-face format as they encourage more interaction among students or students-teachers, they are more effective and straightforward, and you can understand the explanations better. You can also ask for help to solve doubts while doing them and receive better feedback from writing corrections. On the contrary, 23% consider that tasks must be done through online because you can do them at any time from home (without stress), you avoid being distracted by other students talking (just you and the computer, while completing quizzes) and you can work in groups through digital platforms as already mentioned.

Regarding oral presentations, as can be seen in Figure 13 (see appendix), 44.3% of both students and teachers agreed that the most effective way of doing or preparing presentations is through the face-to-face mode because of the following reasons: 1. More participation; 2. More dynamism; 3. More impact towards having a physical audience; 4. More interaction; 5. More help (similar to real-life scenario), so better for learning; 6. Direct contact to people (no camera or screen). 36.1% consider that presentations had been done better through online platforms because of the following reasons: 1. You avoid being shy in front of an audience; 2. You can have direct Internet connectivity (therefore share some resources at the same moment when you speak); 3. You have more comfort (being at home, no movement, camera and not people); and 4. you are able to use digital platforms and, therefore, you have more confidence by working in groups. Online mode is not that intimidating and you can have more time to prepare them in advance. Conversely, only 19.7% consider that presentations must be done through a combination of both modes (face-to-face and online) because they have a similar way of preparation as you can improve oral skills through it and because it is possible to perform them in both ways.

Bearing in mind all these considerations, this research may be expanded in different ways, and universities could be involved, which would facilitate access to a large number of surveyed respondents for this type of research, and give more security in the data and, therefore, greater statistical efficiency. We will also take into account other materials in order to analyse more in depth the effectiveness of traditional, virtual or both combined modalities in the teaching and learning context of Business English.

Conclusion

To sum up, the research findings regarding the effectiveness of face-to-face, online or combination of both modalities for the teaching and learning of English have shown that although the virtual modality seems to be a more comfortable way for studying and teaching as you do not have to move from your home, the traditional one is the most preferred by respondents for this type of foreign language instruction because it enhances not only interaction among students and teacher-students but it also increases motivation for performing collaborative tasks.

Our research suggests that the fusion of both modalities is the best option for both teaching and learning foreign languages as it combines physical communication and the use of technological devices that both enrich students' knowledge and help to make classes more dynamic. Hence, the pandemic has offered an unbeatable opportunity to articulate change in teaching and learning by fostering, according to the data of this questionnaire, a combination of traditional and virtual settings. Finally, it would appear that learning and teaching English through a virtual application cannot fully replace the traditional classroom as the latter involves real-life learning experiences (depending on the subject, but no doubt for Business English) and human interaction among students and teachers. Thus, this blended learning (face-to-face and online) will strengthen learners' motivation in two ways: students will be able to interact in the real classroom; and students will lose their stage fear of speaking English through the introduction of new user-friendly technology.

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Webgraphy

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vb01jsi2J3w9hV-xiWn-bIpRBhQ8fMciSNXqINGk9aE/edit> → link of the Questionnaire for the methodology of this article (last visited, 13th June 2022).

Appendix

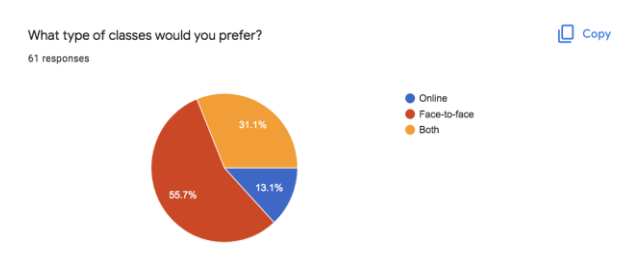


FIGURE 1. TYPES OF CLASSES: FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE OR BOTH.
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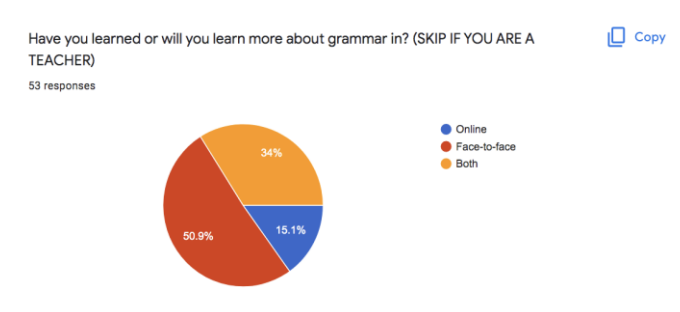


FIGURE 2. LEARNING GRAMMAR IN FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE OR BOTH.
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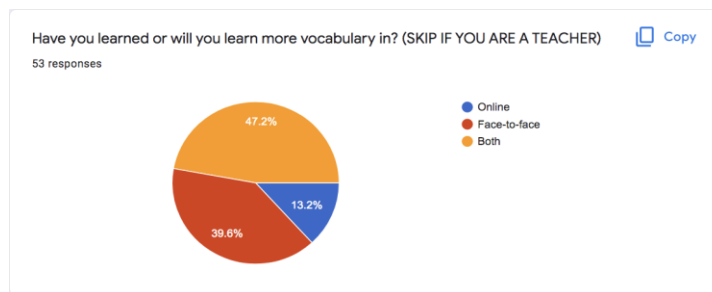


FIGURE 3. LEARNING VOCABULARY IN FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE OR BOTH.
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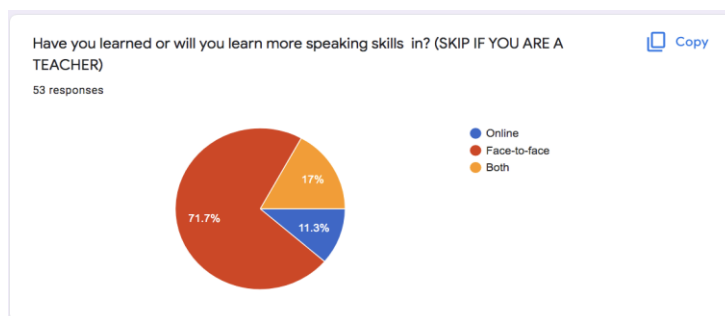


FIGURE 4. LEARNING SPEAKING IN FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE OR BOTH.
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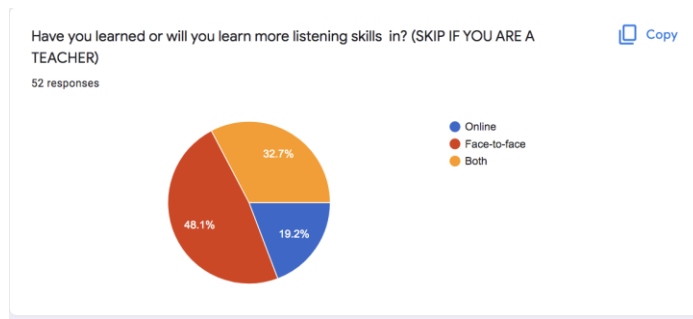


FIGURE 5. LEARNING LISTENING IN FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE OR BOTH.
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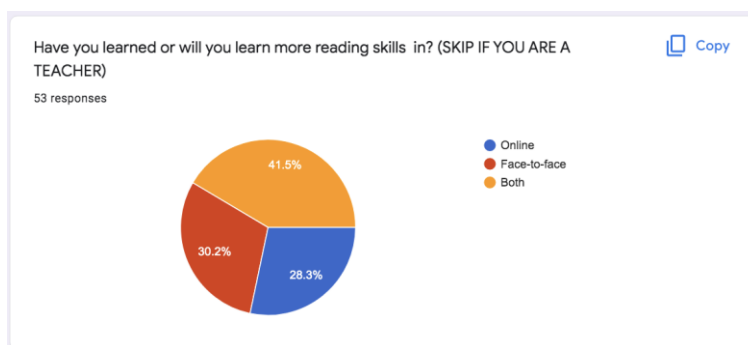


FIGURE 6. LEARNING TO-FACE, ONLINE OR
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READING IN FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE OR BOTH.
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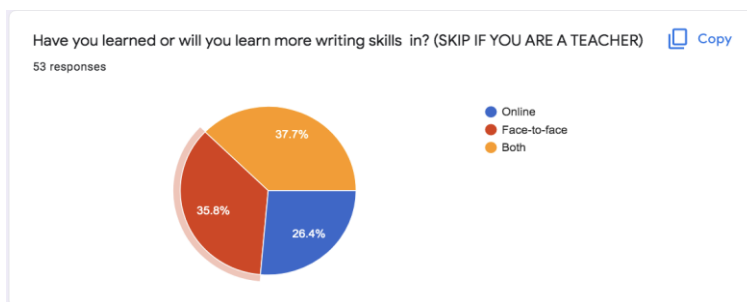


FIGURE 7. LEARNING WRITING IN FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE OR BOTH.
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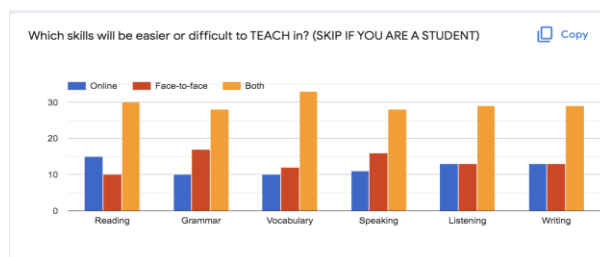


FIGURE 8. DIFFICULTY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING LANGUAGE SKILLS.
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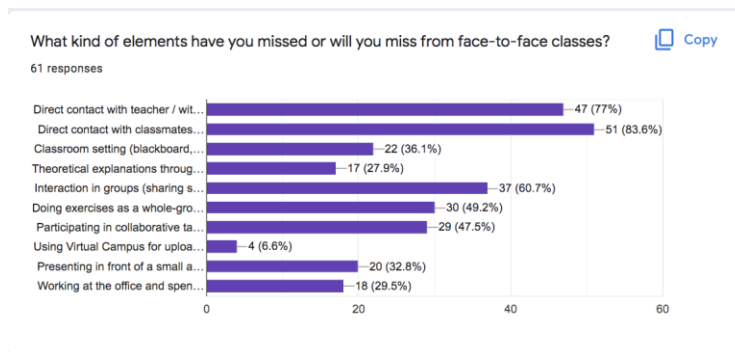


FIGURE 9. MISSING FACTORS OF A FACE-TO-FACE CLASS.
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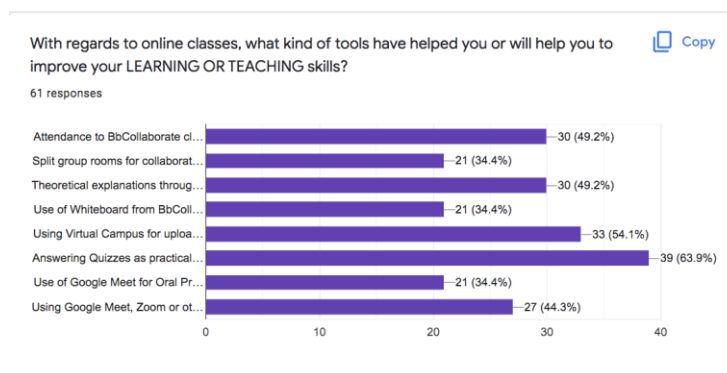


FIGURE 10. MISSING FACTORS OF AN ONLINE CLASS.
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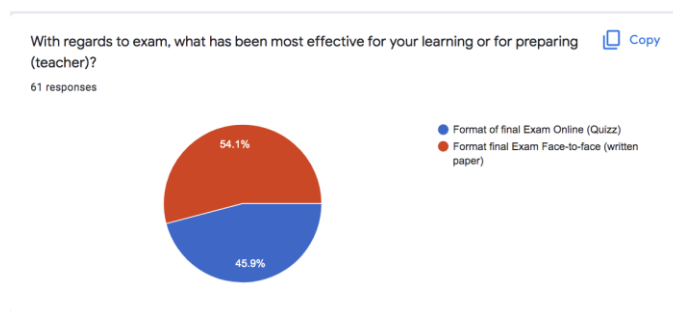


FIGURE 11. EFFECTIVENESS OF DOING OR PREPARING AN EXAM.
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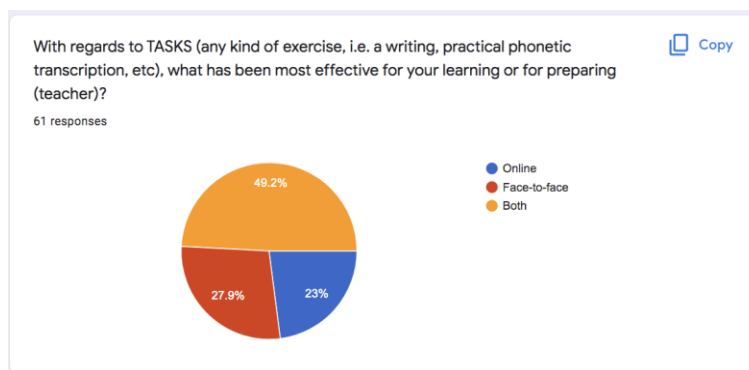


FIGURE 12. EFFECTIVENESS OF DOING OR PREPARING TASKS.
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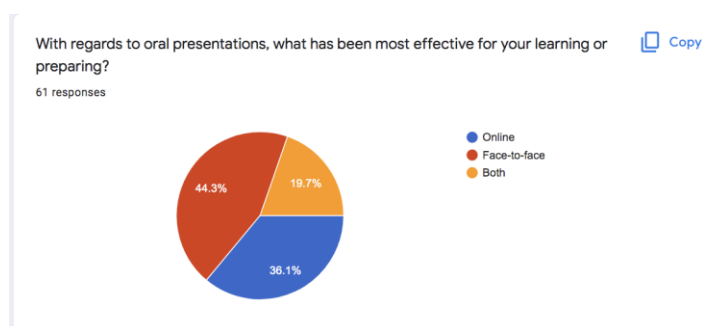


FIGURE 13. EFFECTIVENESS OF DOING OR PREPARING ORAL PRESENTATIONS.
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Andrea Ruiz Cirlot graduated in English Studies at the University of Barcelona and undertaken a Master's in Teacher Training in Secondary Education, High School and Official Language Schools with a major in English. She has the Certificate of Proficiency in English from the University of Michigan. She is a doctorate student of the Doctoral Program *Translation and Language Sciences* at Pompeu Fabra University. She has been an associate professor of English for Business and English for Social Sciences at the Economics and Business Faculty from the University of Barcelona. She is the translator to Spanish of *The Shortest History of Europe* by John Hirst (Black Inc, 2012); Barcelona, RBA, 2015.