

# UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

## "INFLUENCE OF VIRTUAL EDUCATION ON ORAL PRODUCTION OF EFL LEARNERS"

## **RESEARCH PROJECT**

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

## BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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## Advisor's approval

In my role as Advisor of the research paper under the title "**Influence of virtual** education on oral production of EFL learners" prepared by Alisson Nicole Ramirez Rodriguez, undergraduate student of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Career, Major of Educational Science and Language at Peninsula of Santa Elena State University I declare that after oriented, studied and reviewed the project, I approve it in its entirety because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

Sincerely,

bronice fimones

Leda. Julieta Verónica Limones Borbor, Msc. CI: 0916783913 ADVISOR

## **Statement of authorship**

I, Alisson Nicole Ramirez Rodriguez with ID number 0928271568 undergraduate student at Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, school of Education Sciences and Languages, as a prerequisite to obtaining a bachelor's degree in Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages in my role as one of author of the research project "Influence of virtual Education on oral production of ELF learners," Certify that this work is of my authorship, except for the quotes, statements, and reflections used in this research paper.

Alisson Nicol Ramirez Rodríguez

## Declaration

The content of the following graduation work is my responsibility; the intellectual property belongs to Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena.

Alisson Nicol Ramirez Rodríguez

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## Dedication

To my dear mom Janeth, for giving me a wonderful life, teaching me values, and filling my heart with good feelings. Thank you for showing me how to be strong despite my disability and for being the person who brightens my days.

To my dad Roy, who taught me strength, instilled values, and supported me through challenging times in my life. You are the best father in the world.

To my brother Andersson and my friends, thank you for supporting me throughout my life and being essential pieces in my personal growth.

Alisson Ramírez

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#### Abstract

The pandemic was the starting point for the implementation of virtual education, which required teachers to adapt to this new modality. However, during this process, students faced difficulties in learning the English language, especially in the development of their oral production skills due to a lack of interest, insecurity, or motivation. Therefore, it was crucial to find a solution to address this problem and improve active participation and performance of students in the virtual environment. The study was conducted as a descriptive research, focusing on a qualitative approach. Additionally, a content analysis was performed to identify relevant categories. Furthermore, a documentary study was conducted to clarify the most relevant aspects of the project. The results indicated that SpeechAce, Discussion talk, cumulative talk, exploratory talk, Liulishuo-A Speaking Tutor, Grading Your Spoken English, and Google Assistant were tools that had a positive impact on EFL learners. These tools helped improve their pronunciation, fluency, acquisition of new vocabulary, and conversational skills in various contexts. During these years, e-learning of the English language, especially in the development of oral production, has undergone significant changes. It is essential to consider the needs of students to maintain their interest in the process of learning a new language and to avoid difficulties when conducting assessments.

KEY WORDS: virtual education; oral production; e-learning; efl learners

#### Resumen

La pandemia fue el punto de partida para la implementación de la educación virtual, lo que requirió que los profesores se adaptaran a esta nueva modalidad. Sin embargo, durante este proceso, los estudiantes enfrentaron dificultades en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés, especialmente en el desarrollo de sus habilidades de producción oral debido a la falta de interés, inseguridad o motivación. Por lo tanto, fue crucial encontrar una solución para abordar este problema y mejorar la participación activa y el desempeño de los estudiantes en el entorno virtual. El estudio se llevó a cabo como una investigación descriptiva, centrándose en un enfoque cualitativo. Además, se realizó un análisis de contenido para identificar las categorías pertinentes. Asimismo, se llevó a cabo un estudio documental para aclarar los aspectos más relevantes del proyecto. Los resultados indicaron que SpeechAce, Discussion talk, cumulative talk, exploratory talk, Liulishuo-A Speaking Tutor, Grading Your Spoken English y Google Assistant fueron herramientas que tuvieron un impacto positivo en los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). Estas herramientas ayudaron a mejorar su pronunciación, fluidez, adquisición de nuevo vocabulario y habilidades para tener conversaciones en diversos contextos. Durante estos años, el aprendizaje electrónico del idioma inglés, especialmente en el desarrollo de la producción oral, ha experimentado cambios significativos. Es fundamental considerar las necesidades de los estudiantes para mantener su interés en el proceso de aprendizaje de un nuevo idioma y evitar dificultades al momento de realizar evaluaciones.

PALABRAS CLAVES: educación virtual: aprendizaje electrónico; producción oral;

alumnos de efl

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#### **Chapter I**

## Introduction

In the spring of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people were forced to stay at home, leading educational institutions to adopt remote learning using virtual platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. This transition created opportunities for the development of oral production skills in English as a foreign language, with innovative and creative approaches that continue to this day.

According to (Gómez, 2022) "students in the region do not know there are special sounds in English that do not exist in Spanish, therefore, they are using the Spanish pronunciation system and sounds to speak in English". In other words, in Latin America, there are some problems when students speak English. The most common problem has to do with pronunciation, which affects fluency when making a presentation. However, this issue has been gradually improving as the months have passed.

According to a study conducted at the Technical University of Manabí, students encountered several difficulties in their English language learning journey, particularly when it came to delivering oral presentations. The acquisition of this skill demanded substantial dedication and perseverance, predominantly due to the virtual nature of the learning environment. (Cevallos Vélez et al., 2020)

Based on the issue at hand, it is evident that virtual education encountered numerous stumbling blocks and inconveniences during the initial months of the pandemic. Moreover, the instruction of the English language, with a specific focus on oral proficiency development, did not yield highly satisfactory outcomes. Nonetheless, it is imperative to underscore the advancements that have emerged in virtual education as a result of innovative practices. Consequently, this has given rise to a couple of pertinent questions.

What is the influence of virtual education on the oral production of EFL learners?

What tools were used in virtual education to improve the oral production of EFL learners?

## **Chapter II**

## Methodology

According to (Balestrini, 2000) the methodological framework "is the set of procedures to be followed in order to achieve the objectives of the information in a valid way and with high precision" (p.44). In other words, it is a systematic structure for the analysis, ordering, and collection of information, which facilitates the interpretation of the results related to the problem under investigation.

## Scope of research

Given the research questions; What is the influence of virtual education on the oral production of EFL learners? And What tools were used in virtual education to improve the oral production of EFL learners? This project resorted to a narrative study because the topic has sufficient theoretical support, and it is essential to know in detail how virtual education influenced the quality of oral production in EFL lear. (Hernández et al., 2010) mention that descriptive research "seeks to specify properties, characteristics and important features of any phenomenon being analyzed. It describes trends of a group or population."

The present study will focus on the qualitative approach since it is the one that best fits the needs of the research. The choice of this approach lies in the deep and detailed understanding that we seek to obtain about the phenomenon under study, allowing us to explore the perspectives, experiences, and opinions of the participants in a more complete manner. Therefore, the qualitative approach is understood as the "methodological procedure that uses words, texts, discourses, drawings, graphics, and images' [...] qualitative research studies different objects to understand the social life of the subject through the meanings developed by the subject" [...] qualitative research studies different objects in order to understand the social life of the subject. (Katayama Omura, 2014) *Techniques* 

Due to the circumstances of the research and the already established approach, we resorted to the technique of content analysis, which will classify and compare the various theories about virtual education, the learning of the English language specifically in oral production, and its influence in times of pandemic.

Content analysis is referred to as fundamental, since "it is a type of measurement of a scientific nature applied to a message, within the framework of purposes in the field of social sciences." (Bardin, 1991)

In addition, it is important to emphasize that the purpose of the project is to carry out a documentary study, whose main function is to search, process and store important data contained in documents. It is also defined as "the methodical and formal process that facilitates and supports the agile and systematized access to the product of scientific research, reported in documentary sources". (Chong, 2007)

Initially, background information will be presented to provide essential context on the subject. Subsequently, the theories gathered from the data will be categorized into relevant groups, culminating in the presentation of coherent and conclusive results.

#### **Chapter III**

### Literature review

Over the years, various theories have been developed to elucidate crucial aspects of English language learning, particularly in the domain of oral production, which has shown noteworthy advancements.

Oral communication in a foreign language involves academic comprehension, expression repetition, and cultural understanding. Japanese find speaking easier, while Finns consider English oral production challenging. (Paaki, 2020). It is also important to highlight that oral production is challenging for Spanish speakers as well.

(Yen-Chen et al., 2015) "Applying role-playing strategy to enhance learners' writing and speaking skills in EFL courses using Facebook and Skype as learning tools: a case study in Taiwan" 42 participants who are enrolled in an English conversation course at a business school in Taiwan. In the course, they must use Facebook and Skype. The results indicate that the students improved their speaking and writing skills through the learning tools and role-playing activities. It also demonstrated that the students were able to enhance their oral and written expression through self-correction and peer-to-peer learning.

(Al-Jarf, 2021) explained in his study EFL SPEAKING PRACTICE IN DISTANCE LEARNING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC 2020-2021 the use of speaking activities in the distance learning (DL) environment to enhance students' speaking skills. These student-centered and task-based activities involve preparing assigned topics at home and utilizing various resources to research and summarize information. Students also practice their presentations and receive grades for their efforts. During the pandemic, instructors adopted formative assessment methods in DL, evaluating students' oral performance and participation. Some used rubrics to assess fluency, expression, and language accuracy.

(Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019) In their study The Impact of Social Media on EFL Learners' Speaking Skill: A Survey Study Involving EFL Teachers and Students based on a survey, 80 EFL teachers and 120 students from the Azad Islamic Universities of Iran participate. The benefit obtained from social media varies among teachers. WhatsApp and Telegram are particularly popular among students compared to other social media platforms. Teachers are aware of the usefulness of social media, as they use them to publish educational resources for their students. Students also take advantage of social media to improve their skills through online conversations. Furthermore, the use of social media is encouraged as an effective strategy in virtual education. Virtual education is "a high-impact strategy in improving educational coverage, relevance, and quality at all levels and types of training, due to its multimedia, hypertextual, and interactive features." (Crisol-Moya et al., 2020)

Currently, e-learning, also known as virtual teaching, is experiencing steady growth, and is expected to continue in the coming years. This methodology is adaptable and is based on a pedagogical model that strengthens the teaching-learning processes. Moreover, e-learning offers an educational solution by complementing traditional teaching with methods, models, and spaces that incorporate Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to enhance educational interaction. (Cedeño Zambrano et al., 2020)

Moreover, a project was executed by. (Jaramillo Chérrez, 2007) A case study of the impact and usefulness of synchronous voice chat to improve EFL learners spoken production, involved two Spanish-speaking students learning English in Ecuador and two native English speakers in Iowa, USA. The results showed that voice chat interactions with native speakers helped ESL students improve their fluency, acquire vocabulary, and feel more confident speaking with native speakers. Disfluency cues also played an important role in the development of fluency and the native speakers' perception of the students' speech. Desktop computers with webcams and headsets were used for interactions in Ecuador.

Throughout these two decades, the development of the English language, specifically in speaking skills, has been satisfactory, despite this, it is necessary to mention that the process of learning to speak in one's native language or a second language is a difficult and gradual one,

causing even anxiety and frustration in students as it demands the ability to convey information correctly, effectively, and appropriately. (Macías Mendoza, 2017)

Furthermore, it should be taken into account that students feel pressured when their mistakes are corrected too often. For that reason, it is always advisable to make corrections at the end of presentations, as it can help avoid the student's frustration and anxiety when learning English. (Dastjerdi & Vahi, 2012)

## **Chapter IV**

#### Outcomes

In this section, the research results are presented, separating each relevant aspect from the literature, such as categories, to provide a deeper understanding of the study. As the study lays a solid foundation for future explorations, its implications resonate beyond the academic sphere, encouraging the integration of new knowledge into educational practices and beyond.

The first case to analyze is Supporting EFL Learners with a virtual environment: A focus on L2 pronunciation by (Aiello & Mongibello, 2019) The course, funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and part of UNIOR's Progetto di Formazione a Distancia. It aimed to raise awareness of the different types of pronunciations that exist in the English language and the cultural appropriations when performing a mispronunciation. The course was divided into six units, 456 students entered and only 370 completed the course. 70% of the students completed the courses successfully albeit with moderately high grades, such as a halfway decent GPA. There were also drawbacks related to s & z consonants. There were

problems in intonation level rhythm and stress. Despite these drawbacks the students became more aware of their shortcomings.

In the same way, (He & Salam, 2022) in the research: Oral English Development in Virtual Class among Chinese Learners through Three Ways of Talking: In this project, three types of conversations were used to introduce the different contexts when speaking English. Discussable talk, cumulative talk exploratory talk. These three types of conversation are very useful and flexible. They are also effective for video recording.

Furthermore, Developing English language learners' oral production with a digital gamebased mobile application by (Wang & Han, 2021), 30 second-year college students pursuing a four-year undergraduate degree in Early Childhood English Education at a national university in China, aged between 19 and 21 years. They used the mobile application "Liulishuo-A Speaking Tutor, Grading Your Spoken English" to enhance monologic oral production. Developed by Shanghai, the app used game-based elements to stimulate interest in practicing spoken English, offering diverse practice topics for users of different backgrounds. It featured an automatic scoring system and personalized dashboard to maintain motivation and set achievable goals. The study focused solely on the impact of the digital game-based mobile language learning application on learning outcomes, without considering other aspects like motivation and enjoyment.

(Tai, 2022) In his study, he demonstrated Effects of intelligent personal assistants on EFL learners' oral proficiency outside the classroom, in a semester-long extracurricular program, 89 first-year university students were divided into three groups: those who interacted with Google

Assistant, native English speakers, and non-native English speakers. Using Google Assistant significantly improved EFL students' oral proficiency, similar to interacting with L1 English speakers. Interviews revealed that Google Assistant's mobility and feedback helped students practice speaking with less fear of making mistakes

There are several aspects that must be taken into account for an effective virtual oral

intervention. These aspects are shown in the following figure:

## Figure 1

Tools	Process	Efficiency
Discussion talk, cumulative talk exploratory talk	hey are flexible and provide a better context	provide effective dialogue and in education can be used quietly in an elaborate way.
SpeechAce	Speech recognition system to differentiate between different types of pronunciation and improve student skills	99% efficiently, it provides the necessary tools to improve the level of pronunciation.
Liulishuo-A Speaking Tutor, Grading Your Spoken English	An interactive application that rewards students every time they engage in any activity.	It is effective for students who are accustomed to constant repetitions, as it improves pronunciation quality and fluency.

Tools that improved Oral production in EFL L learners

Tools	Process	Efficiency
Google Assistant	10-minute daily sessions, where students engage in conversation with Google Assistant.	Satisfactory results, it is a way to introduce the English language into everyday life

#### **Chapter V**

## Discussion

Answering the question. What is the influence of virtual education on the oral production of EFL learners? Based on previous research, virtual education has had a significant impact on the oral production of EFL students, despite the health emergency. Educators were compelled to implement diverse strategies to keep students engaged with the screen. At the beginning of the pandemic, it was perceived as a potential obstacle for students to achieve excellent oral production. However, over time, they have gradually adapted, leading to positive outcomes. These advancements can be attributed, to a large extent, to the effectiveness of ICT in the educational process, which was further driven by the efforts of the educators.

And the second question: What tools were used in virtual education to improve the oral production of EFL learners? In virtual classes, tools such as Google Assistant or the Liulishuo app were used, with a focus on daily usage, to help students continue practicing the English language and maintain their progress. Furthermore, SpeechAce can be of great assistance in improving pronunciation and fluency, along with the three speech modes, making it very useful for practicing conversations in various contexts.

#### **CHAPTER VI**

## **Proposal and final considerations**

In the pursuit of enhancing language learning and communication skills, this section presents a compelling proposal that holds promise for future research. Virtual tools designed specifically to enhance oral production could serve as a valuable addition to language classrooms or conversational courses. By integrating such tools into the learning environment, learners may have the opportunity to refine their pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary acquisition.

The potential benefits of utilizing virtual tools for oral practice are vast. Learners can engage in interactive exercises and simulations, providing them with authentic real-life situations that promote language use in context. The immediacy of feedback from these virtual tools can empower students to self-correct and refine their speaking skills with confidence. Moreover, the flexibility and accessibility of virtual resources allow learners to practice language skills outside the traditional classroom setting, facilitating continuous improvement and independent language development

## Figure 2

Proposal and considerations to take into account.

Phases      Actions      Expected outcomes
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22

Phase 1: creating the	Relying on the SpeechAce system to improve pronunciation.	Having teachers and proper training in virtual tools
classroom environment	Apply three ways to conduct a conversation.	All tools are expected to fulfill their established function.
	Using Google Assistant	Learners are expected to find
	Introducing the liulishuo application	resources easy to use

Phases	Actions	Expected outcomes
Phase 2: Performing a diagnostic test	Providing the first training Objectively rate students' level of pronunciation, fluency and vocabulary	A basic level oral presentation must be made, Students are expected to be able to express themselves correctly.
Phase 3: Results verification	Conduct a program success testing process. Testing of the effectiveness of the applications used in the course	A holistic evaluation process of the course performance will be conducted Students who have used the tools provided in the course are expected to have improved their oral production.

## **Chapter VII**

## Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to provide valuable information to the academic community about the impact of technological tools in the context of virtual education. Through this study, the aim was to highlight the importance of these tools in the process of learning and teaching English, especially in a virtual environment that became more relevant due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures of confinement that led to a rapid adoption of online education. The analysis focused on exploring various technologies and resources used in virtual education to enhance the oral production of EFL students. Among the highlighted tools were SpeechAce, a voice recognition platform that helped differentiate different types of pronunciation and improve students' skills in this aspect, and Liulishuo, a mobile application based on games that stimulated students' interest and active participation in spoken English practice.

Additionally, the positive impact of Google Assistant, a virtual assistant, was examined in developing students' oral fluency, enabling them to interact with a native English speaker and providing immediate and helpful feedback to enhance their conversational skills. These tools proved to be useful for both students accustomed to constant repetition and exercises, and those seeking a more practical and engaging way to learn and practice English. However, during the research, an important aspect that deserves consideration was identified: learning and practicing English as a foreign language are not easy tasks but require constant effort and dedication. While these technological tools have shown to be effective in improving students' pronunciation and fluency, the need for constant commitment and motivation on the part of the students to achieve a satisfactory level of proficiency was emphasized. Additionally, it was observed that the projects reviewed in this research required a considerable amount of time to achieve realistic and significant results. Several months of research and continuous practice were necessary to observe notable progress in students' pronunciation and oral fluency. This reaffirmed the notion that learning a foreign language, especially the acquisition of oral expression skills, is a gradual and challenging process that requires patience and persistence.

It is essential to highlight the importance of these tools, as they represent a fascinating opportunity to explore and understand their various functions. By thoroughly analyzing their capabilities, one can appreciate how they can play a fundamental role in the process of learning English in other countries. If the English level of students in these nations can be improved, it is plausible that such advancements would also be embraced with great interest and acceptance in Ecuador.

Likewise, this study invites reflection on how technology can significantly contribute to meeting the educational needs of students. Properly implementing these tools can pave the way for more inclusive and personalized education, benefiting a wide spectrum of students. However, it is crucial to maintain a humble and open attitude toward the possibilities these technologies can offer. While promising, it will always be necessary to constantly review their results and effectiveness, and be willing to adapt and improve according to the changing needs of students. In conclusion, the study on the use of these tools in English language learning opens a window of opportunity to enhance education in Ecuador and beyond. With a continuous focus on research and the adoption of new educational technologies, we can aspire to a positive transformation in the process of teaching and language learning, enriching the students' experience.

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Anexo: Antiplagiarism Report

La Libertad, I I de diciembre de 2023

En mi calidad de Tutor del trabajo de Integración Curricular, denominado "Influence of Virtual Education on Oral Production of EFL leamers", elaborado por la estudiante Alisson Nicole Ramirez Rodriguez, de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio Compilatio luego de haber cumplido los requisitos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación se encuentra con el 2% de la valoración permitida, por lo tanto se procede a emitir el informe.

Atentamente,

beronice fimons

Lcda. Verónica Limones Borbor, Msc.