



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

**“DIGITAL COMPETENCE OF EFL TEACHERS IN
VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: TEACHERS'
PERCEPTIONS”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

**BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL
AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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ADVISOR APPROVAL

In my role as Advisor of the research paper under the title **“DIGITAL COMPETENCE OF EFL TEACHERS IN VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS”** prepared by Gloria Mayerly Rivera Sarabino, undergraduate student of 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 in its entirety, because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to evaluation of the academic tribunal.

Sincerely,



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Declaration

The information about the project and the content of this degree work and research are the responsibility of its author; the intellectual property belongs to the Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena.

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-Gloria Mayerly Rivera Sarabino.

Dedication

I want to dedicate this work to my family, to my mother Margarita Sarabino, who has always been more than my mother, my friend with whom I have been able to laugh, enjoy life, cry and feel peace throughout my life; to my siblings Mayra and Patricio, and to my nephews Valentina and Lucas, because they have always been there for me, supporting me, offering me words of encouragement and their constant affection to motivate me to keep going; and to Leslie and Bombon, who have occupied a very important place in my life and have given me their constant support.

-With love, Gloria Mayerly Rivera Sarabino

Abstract

Developing digital skills for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) offers significant benefits to both teachers and students, as it fosters active participation. Furthermore, the use of digital tools motivates students in their self-directed learning and encourages teachers to fully engage them in their activities. Understanding teachers' digital skills and their perspectives on this topic is of paramount importance. Therefore, this research aims to explore teachers' perceptions of their digital competence in virtual learning environments for teaching EFL at Santa Elena Peninsula State University during the 2026 academic year. The research involves a sample of English teachers from the National Pedagogy and Foreign Languages program and will be conducted using qualitative research methods, such as individual interviews. The project seeks to gather detailed information on teachers' perceptions of their digital skills and how they utilize them in virtual learning environments. The research results will serve as a reference for the development of programs that promote learning in virtual environments and the development of digital skills in both students and teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL).

KEY WORDS: Digital competence, Teacher's perception, Qualitative research, Digitals tools, English as Foreign Language (EFL).

Resumen

El desarrollo de habilidades digitales para la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) representa un beneficio significativo tanto para docentes como para estudiantes, ya que fomenta la participación. Además, el uso de herramientas digitales motiva a los estudiantes en su aprendizaje autodirigido y anima a los docentes a involucrarlos plenamente en sus actividades. El desarrollo de habilidades digitales en los docentes, así como sus perspectivas sobre este tema, es de suma importancia. Por lo tanto, esta investigación tiene como objetivo explorar las percepciones de los docentes sobre su competencia digital en entornos virtuales de aprendizaje para la enseñanza de EFL en la Universidad Estatal de la Península de Santa Elena durante el año académico 2026. La investigación involucra una muestra de docentes de inglés del programa de Pedagogía Nacional y de Lenguas Extranjeras y se llevará a cabo mediante métodos de investigación cualitativos, como entrevistas individuales. El proyecto busca recopilar información detallada sobre las percepciones de los docentes acerca de sus habilidades digitales y cómo utilizarlas en entornos virtuales de aprendizaje. Los resultados de la investigación servirán como referencia para el desarrollo de programas que fomenten el aprendizaje en entornos virtuales y el desarrollo de habilidades digitales tanto en estudiantes como en docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL).

PALABRAS CLAVES: Competencia digital, Percepción del profesor, Investigación cualitativa, Herramientas digitales, inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL).

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Introduction

English is essential today in various fields, including academic, professional, and social settings. Mastering English opens valuable opportunities for exchange programs, scholarships, and international courses. Furthermore, it facilitates the development of digital skills, as the use of technological tools such as interactive platforms with games, quizzes, and tests contributes to language learning. Therefore, implementing the use of digital tools and promoting the development of digital skills among teachers is fundamental for teaching English in virtual environments. A teaching and learning process can be significantly more effective when students actively participate and construct their own concepts and knowledge through their experiences, interests, and needs.

This study was conducted based on the experiences and perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at university students using virtual learning environments and their digital skills. It also explores how digital skills can be developed and how self-directed learning, motivation, and the development of digital competencies can be fostered. This indicates that the implementation of digital tools is not merely temporary but requires consistent use for skills development, thus contributing to meaningful learning, as well as critical thinking, autonomy, creativity, and other capabilities. The main objective of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions of their digital competence in virtual learning environments for teaching English as a foreign language.

Faculty members at Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena face certain challenges in developing their digital skills, which hinders their ability to teach English in virtual environments. Implementing technological tools in the teaching process is a strategy that promotes English language acquisition through active student participation. To integrate new learning strategies and enable students to continue their self-directed learning outside the classroom, thereby boosting their motivation to learn English, this research could encourage faculty to implement new strategies using virtual platforms. It could also promote ongoing professional development through conferences, talks, webinars, or by connecting with colleagues who have learned about virtual tools that allow them to develop their digital skills. Understanding the importance of developing digital skills is crucial, as it allows faculty to better connect with students and address their specific needs.

This study adopted a qualitative approach. It was conducted through individual interviews with five professors from the Faculty of Pedagogy in National and Foreign Languages at the Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, using the Zoom videoconferencing platform. The objective of the interviews was to gather detailed information about their digital skills and use of digital tools, training opportunities, and the importance of digital competence in strengthening pedagogical practices in virtual learning environments, from the perspective of professors teaching English as a foreign language to university students.

Chapter I

The Problem

Research Topic.

Online education

Project title.

Digital Competence of EFL Teachers in Virtual Learning Environments: Teachers' Perceptions

Problem Statement

Online education has become a global phenomenon due to the emergence of new technologies, the widespread adoption of the Internet, and the demand for a skilled workforce for a digital economy. (Emin Özen, 2021). For this reason and many others, technologies provide a new qualification to the individual, making this a key reference for educational institutions.

This implies that education is constantly changing, innovating, and adapting. Virtual education began to gain more relevance after the COVID-19 pandemic because, due to the quarantine imposed by the World Health Organization (WHO), there was a radical shift in people's lifestyles, and consequently, in education, which began to focus on virtual learning and self-directed learning. Previously, some teachers were familiar with the virtual system, but for others it was a challenge, as it involved adapting to a new teaching method and the use of technology, as well as maintaining students' attention and motivation.

It is very important to discuss student morale, as it is considered the foundation of a good education because students are often motivated by their beliefs, desires, needs, and fears. If a

teacher motivates their students to continue their studies, they ensure that the students achieve their learning goals. Maintaining student attention is a significant challenge for teachers, as they are responsible for creating a welcoming learning environment that captures their attention.

According to De la A Rivas (2023) “Virtual education offers unique opportunities for language learners to engage in interactive and dynamic learning experiences.

Moreover, the implementation of virtual environments in language instruction has the potential to foster motivation, engagement, and interaction among students. (De La A Rivas, 2023, p. 13).

Technological advancements have helped teachers improve online education, which can enhance student experience. This includes the use of platforms for in-person classes, as well as digital platforms such as Word Wall, YouTube, and Kahoot, among others. These platforms are known to be effective for learning, but their usefulness varies from the perspective of both students and teachers. Furthermore, while there has been an increase in the variety of tools available, there has also been a greater degree of difficulty in using them.

Justification

This research seeks to analyze, examine, and identify the educational methodologies implemented by university professors when teaching English, as well as their adaptability to virtual learning environments. This could highlight the pedagogical challenges professors face when transmitting their skills to their students.

Currently, there are several ways to study, such as in-person, hybrid, and online. This research focuses on the online modality, which is viable since many virtual platforms now exist that can achieve the goal of effective learning. Therefore, it is considered that quality education should be available to everyone today. The implementation of virtual environments is of immense help to both professors and their students. Currently, professors are looking for learning resources that guide their students toward self-study, thus continuing to motivate them to achieve their goals.

The preliminary project to be presented is viable because it has human resources to conduct its research thoroughly and obtain excellent results. This research will benefit both professors and students by enabling them to conduct further research related to this topic. This will help future research using compatible methodologies and will allow for comparative analysis of results and the drawing of some conclusions.

Furthermore, this study will contribute to future research on digital competence in English language teaching by providing evidence that may support the development of teacher training programs and the effective integration of digital technologies into virtual learning environments.

Problem Formulation.

General Question.

What perceptions do EFL teachers have about their digital competence in virtual learning environments?

Specific questions

- What digital competences do EFL teachers perceive as essential for teaching in virtual environment?
- What challenges and opportunities do EFL teachers perceive in developing their digital competence?
- How do EFL teachers perceive the role of digital competence in enhancing teaching and learning processes in virtual learning environments?

Objectives

General Objective

To explore teachers' perceptions about their digital competence in virtual learning environments in EFL teaching.

Specific objectives

To identify EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the digital skills required for teaching in virtual learning environments.

To analyze the challenges and opportunities perceived by EFL teachers in developing their digital competence.

- To interpret how EFL teachers perceive the role of digital competence in enhancing teaching and learning processes in virtual environments.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Background

The rapid development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has transformed educational systems worldwide, leading to significant changes in teaching and learning processes. The integration of digital technologies into education has increased the need for teachers to develop digital competence, particularly in virtual learning environments where technology serves as the primary medium of instruction. This situation became especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the adoption of online education and highlighted the importance of teachers' digital competence in ensuring effective learning experiences (UNESCO, 2023).

Digital competence has emerged as one of the most relevant professional competencies for educators in the twenty-first century. According to Redecker (2022), digital competence refers to the confident, critical, and responsible use of digital technologies. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, digital competence is particularly important because teachers frequently employ technological tools to support language acquisition, communication, interaction, and autonomous learning.

At the international level, several studies have examined the relationship between teachers' digital competence and virtual learning environments. Wong and Moorhouse (2021) investigated language teachers' experiences during the transition to online learning in Hong Kong. Their findings revealed that teachers recognized the value of digital technologies in promoting communication and student engagement; however, many educators reported

difficulties related to online classroom management, technological adaptation, and assessment practices. The researchers concluded that continuous professional development is necessary to improve teachers' digital competence and confidence in virtual teaching.

Similarly, König et al. (2022) explored teachers' digital readiness in different educational contexts and found that educators with stronger digital competencies were more likely to adapt successfully to virtual teaching environments. Their study emphasized that technological knowledge alone is insufficient, as teachers also require pedagogical strategies that facilitate meaningful learning through digital resources.

Another international study by Li et al. (2022) examined the implementation of virtual learning environments in teacher education programs. The findings demonstrated that digital platforms contribute positively to collaborative learning, professional development, and technological innovation. The authors argued that virtual environments can enhance teaching effectiveness when educators possess adequate digital competencies and receive appropriate institutional support.

Likewise, Martin et al. (2022) analyzed faculty perceptions regarding virtual learning environments and concluded that teachers generally value the flexibility and accessibility provided by online platforms. Nevertheless, challenges related to student engagement, technological infrastructure, and digital literacy continue to affect the quality of online education. The study highlighted the importance of strengthening teachers' digital skills to maximize the educational potential of virtual learning environments.

More recent research has focused specifically on EFL teachers and their technological competencies. Feng and Sumettikoon (2024) investigated digital literacy among EFL teachers in

higher education institutions. The findings indicated that teachers demonstrated moderate to high levels of digital competence in information management, communication, and content creation. However, limitations were identified in the pedagogical integration of advanced technologies. The researchers recommended ongoing professional training to improve teachers' digital competence and their ability to implement innovative teaching methodologies.

Similarly, Lu et al. (2025) examined language teachers' perceptions regarding technology integration in educational contexts. The findings revealed that teachers with higher levels of digital competence were more likely to implement innovative instructional strategies and use interactive digital resources in their teaching practices. Furthermore, positive perceptions toward technology were associated with greater confidence and effectiveness in virtual teaching environments.

In addition, Salsabila et al. (2025) conducted an empirical investigation into EFL teachers' digital competencies and pedagogical applications. Their study found that digital competence positively influences instructional practices, classroom management, and student engagement. The authors concluded that the development of digital competence should be considered a fundamental component of teacher education programs because it contributes directly to educational quality.

From a Latin American perspective, educational institutions have increasingly incorporated digital technologies into teaching practices. However, several studies have shown that important challenges remain regarding teacher training, access to technological resources, and pedagogical integration. According to Delgado et al. (2022), many teachers possess basic technological skills but require further professional development to effectively integrate digital

tools into teaching and learning processes. The authors emphasized the need for continuous professional development programs focused on digital competence and educational innovation.

In Ecuador, the integration of digital technologies into education has become a national priority due to the increasing implementation of virtual and hybrid learning modalities. The Ministry of Education has promoted policies aimed at strengthening teachers' digital skills and encouraging the use of technological resources in educational settings. Despite these efforts, disparities in teachers' technological preparedness and access to digital resources continue to exist, particularly in higher education institutions.

Within the context of English language teaching, digital competence is closely related to teachers' perceptions of technology and their ability to use digital tools effectively. Teachers' perceptions influence their willingness to adopt innovative methodologies, participate in professional development opportunities, and integrate technology into their instructional practices (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2021). Consequently, understanding teachers' perceptions provides valuable insights into the factors that facilitate or hinder the effective implementation of virtual learning environments.

Although previous studies have examined digital competence and virtual learning separately, there is still a need to explore how university EFL teachers perceive their own digital competence and how these perceptions influence their teaching practices in virtual learning environments. This need is particularly relevant in Ecuadorian higher education institutions, where the adoption of digital technologies continues to evolve.

Therefore, the present study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring university teachers' perceptions regarding digital competence in virtual learning

environments within EFL teaching. The findings are expected to provide valuable information about teachers' experiences, challenges, and professional development needs, contributing to the improvement of digital teaching practices and the quality of language education in virtual contexts.

Pedagogical Basis

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivism is one of the most influential educational theories in contemporary teaching practices. According to Piaget (1972), learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment and experiences that promote cognitive development. In virtual learning environments, students are not passive recipients of information; instead, they participate actively in the learning process through digital tools, collaborative activities, and problem-solving tasks.

For EFL teaching, constructivism encourages students to engage with authentic language materials and technological resources that facilitate meaningful learning experiences. Digital platforms allow learners to interact with content, peers, and teachers while developing linguistic and digital competencies simultaneously. Therefore, this theory supports the integration of technological tools into English language teaching because it promotes active participation, autonomy, and knowledge construction.

Connectivism Theory

According to Siemens (2005), Connectivism explains learning in the digital age. This theory proposes that knowledge is distributed across networks of people, information sources,

and technological systems. Learning occurs when individuals establish connections with these networks and access information effectively.

In virtual learning environments, teachers and students rely on digital platforms, online communities, educational applications, and technological resources to acquire knowledge. This theory is particularly relevant to the present study because digital competence involves the ability to locate, evaluate, manage, and share information through digital technologies.

According to Siemens (2005), the capacity to know where to find information is often more important than possessing the information itself.

TPACK Framework

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006), emphasizes the integration of technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge for effective teaching. Effective teaching requires educators to understand not only their subject matter but also the pedagogical strategies and technological tools necessary to facilitate meaningful learning.

In EFL contexts, teachers must combine English language knowledge with pedagogical approaches and digital technologies. Virtual learning environments require teachers to design engaging activities using educational platforms, multimedia resources, and communication technologies. Consequently, the TPACK framework provides a useful model for understanding teachers' digital competence and their ability to integrate technology effectively into English language teaching.

Theoretical Basis

Digital Competence

Digital competence refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities required to use digital technologies effectively, critically, and responsibly. According to the European Commission (2022), digital competence includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem-solving.

For teachers, digital competence extends beyond the basic use of technological tools. It includes the ability to select appropriate digital resources, design meaningful learning experiences, facilitate online interaction, and evaluate students through digital environments. Recent studies have highlighted that digital competence has become an essential professional requirement for educators, especially after the expansion of online education following the COVID-19 pandemic (Redecker, 2022).

Virtual Learning Environments

Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) are digital platforms that facilitate teaching and learning through online interaction, content management, communication, and assessment. According to Martin et al. (2022), VLEs provide flexible learning opportunities that allow students and teachers to interact regardless of geographical limitations.

The implementation of virtual learning environments has transformed educational practices worldwide. Platforms such as Moodle, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Canvas have become fundamental tools for delivering educational content and fostering communication. These environments require teachers to possess adequate digital competence to ensure effective instruction and student engagement.

Digital Literacy in EFL Teaching

Digital literacy is closely related to digital competence and refers to the ability to access, evaluate, create, and communicate information through digital technologies. According to Ng (2021), digital literacy involves technical, cognitive, and social-emotional dimensions that enable individuals to function effectively in digital contexts.

In EFL teaching, digital literacy supports language learning by providing access to authentic materials, online collaboration opportunities, multimedia resources, and interactive learning experiences. Teachers with strong digital literacy skills are better prepared to incorporate technology into language instruction and promote meaningful learning outcomes.

Teachers' Perceptions

Teachers' perceptions refer to the beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and interpretations educators have regarding educational practices and technologies. According to Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2021), teachers' beliefs significantly influence their willingness to adopt and integrate technological innovations into their teaching practices.

Understanding teachers' perceptions is essential because positive attitudes toward technology often lead to greater integration of digital resources, whereas negative perceptions may create resistance to technological change. Therefore, exploring teachers' perceptions contributes to understanding the factors that facilitate or hinder digital competence development in virtual learning environments.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) encompass digital devices, software, applications, and communication systems used to create, store, process, and exchange

digital information. According to UNESCO (2023), ICT plays a critical role in improving educational quality, accessibility, and inclusion.

In EFL education, ICT provides opportunities for communication, collaboration, language practice, and autonomous learning. The integration of ICT supports innovative teaching methodologies and contributes to the development of digital competence among teachers and students.

Legal basis

Constitución de la República del Ecuador (2008)

Article 26. Right to Education

Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador establishes that education is a fundamental right throughout life and an essential responsibility of the State. This constitutional provision supports the development of educational policies that promote equal access to quality education, including the integration of digital technologies and virtual learning environments that enhance teaching and learning processes. (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

Article 29. Freedom of Education

Article 29 guarantees freedom of education and academic freedom in higher education. It also recognizes the right of individuals to learn according to their cultural context. This article supports the implementation of innovative teaching methodologies and the appropriate use of digital technologies that respect educational diversity and encourage meaningful learning experiences. (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

Article 343. National Education System

Article 343 establishes that the National Education System aims to develop individuals' capacities and competencies through flexible, inclusive, and effective educational processes. This provision reinforces the importance of digital competence among teachers, since technological resources contribute to improving teaching practices and promoting meaningful learning in virtual environments. (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

Article 385. Science, Technology and Innovation

Article 385 promotes the generation, adaptation, and dissemination of scientific knowledge and technological innovation to improve educational quality and national development. In the context of this study, this article supports the integration of digital technologies into English language teaching and highlights the importance of strengthening teachers' digital competence in virtual learning environments. (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

Method

Qualitative method

This research project adopts a qualitative approach involving English Language Pedagogy teachers at Santa Elena Peninsula State University. Its objective is to explore teachers' perceptions of digital competence in virtual learning environments for English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

According to Carter et al. (2021), qualitative research is a methodological approach that emphasizes understanding people's experiences and the meanings they assign to them from their own perspectives.

This approach is based on the collection and analysis of non-numerical data to understand and analyze people's perceptions of a given phenomenon. It is also known for its high flexibility in the research process and the assistance it provides in interpreting the data obtained for a more complete understanding of the phenomenon under study.

That is why the present research emphasizes the collection of experiences by English teachers, which was of great help as it facilitated the collection and interpretation of detailed information. This method helps generate insights into how teachers perceive and develop their digital competence.

Type of research

Phenomenological study

According to (Alhazmi Abdullah A., 2022), a phenomenological study is primarily characterized by exploring the shared experiences of a group of participants, as well as helping us identify common elements within that group. It is conducted through interviews in which participants recount their experiences in detail and how they create meaning from their experiences in different educational contexts.

Therefore, this research will use a phenomenological study to explore teachers' perceptions of their digital competence in virtual learning environments for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Santa Elena Peninsula State University. This includes their interaction with students and virtual platforms. This research also seeks to understand the meanings that teachers ascribe to these concepts based on their lived experiences.

Data Collection Techniques

One-on-One Interview

Interviews are an important data collection technique because they allow researchers to gather detailed information about participants' experiences and perceptions. This technique involves a series of previously prepared questions that enable participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and perspectives regarding the phenomenon under study. This facilitates the interviewee's acquisition of detailed and contextualized information.

According to Karahan, Uca, and Güdük (2022), individual interviews are widely used to collect in-depth information because they facilitate direct interaction between the interviewer and

the participant, allowing researchers to explore participants' experiences and perceptions in detail.

Therefore, interviews are used in this study to collect detailed information about English language teachers' experiences, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Instrument.

Semi-Structured Interview.

The instrument used in this research is a semi-structured interview. This instrument allows researchers to obtain detailed information about participants' experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding digital competence in virtual learning environments. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews enables participants to express their ideas freely while allowing the researcher to explore relevant topics in greater depth. This is very beneficial because it makes studying ideal.

The semi-structured interview includes open-ended questions that encourage participants to provide detailed responses based on their professional experiences. This type of question facilitates a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding digital competence in virtual learning environments. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted via Zoom, recorded with participants' consent, and carried out with English language teachers. Nine open-ended questions will be used to explore teachers' perceptions of digital competence in virtual learning environments for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Nine open-ended questions

will be used to gather information from teachers about their perceptions of their digital competence in virtual learning environments when teaching English as a foreign language.

Interview Questions

This research employs open-ended questions because they allow participants to express their opinions, beliefs, and experiences freely. These questions facilitate an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding digital competence in virtual learning environments.

The interview questions are related to digital competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching within virtual learning environments. They were designed to explore teachers' perceptions of digital competence at Santa Elena Peninsula State University. The objective is to explore the professors' perceptions of digital competencies.

Through individual interviews using these open-ended questions, the researcher will seek to better understand the professors' perceptions of their digital competencies. The data collected will contribute to a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the professors at the Santa Elena Peninsula State University in the context of English as a foreign language.

Population and sample (delimitation of the population and/or study sample)

The population for this study consists of five professors from the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages program at Santa Elena Peninsula State University (UPSE), located in Santa Elena Province, Ecuador. The participants are university professors who teach during the 2025 academic period. The professors included in this research are those who will teach

university students during the 2025 academic year. This population will be randomly selected, and five professors from different subjects will be chosen for the interviews.

To achieve the objective of this study, a sample of five university professors from Santa Elena Peninsula State University (UPSE) was selected. The participants were chosen because they teach in the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages program and have experience in virtual teaching environments. The sample will consist of five professors from the institution, representing various subjects, which will ensure a more comprehensive result.

The study seeks to analyze the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding their digital competence in virtual learning environments. This approach aims to analyze in depth the opinions, experiences, and perspectives of university professors regarding the use of digital technologies in English language teaching. This research will employ semi-structured interviews consisting of open-ended questions. Therefore, a qualitative methodology is appropriate, as it allows for obtaining detailed and contextualized information that contributes to a better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Chapter IV

Analysis of Findings

Brief Explanation of the Findings

Regarding the interpretation of the data obtained from the interviews, teachers' perceptions of their digital competence in virtual learning environments for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) were identified as a central finding. This was highly relevant, as it considered the experiences of the interviewees at Santa Elena Peninsula State University (UPSE) in the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages program, as well as how they achieved their digital competence. Five English teachers with a high level of proficiency described their teaching experience in both blended learning modalities (face-to-face and virtual). These teachers from the university participated in the interviews. They emphasized their perspectives on their teaching and learning processes in virtual environments and their opinions on the use of each platform. It is worth noting that all the interviewees mentioned certain challenges or difficulties when developing their virtual competencies upon beginning to teach using virtual platforms.

They also mentioned some benefits of developing digital competence, which arose from their initial difficulties adapting to them. They also noted that there are often certain barriers for both students and teachers, such as limited internet connectivity or difficult access to the internet in educational institutions and at home. By sharing their personal experiences, the interviewees provided valuable recommendations on developing digital skills and promoted the use of virtual

environments through ongoing training. The interview process was effective in responding to open-ended questions, as it created a free and open space for each participant to share their perspectives and experiences in their own words. Positive aspects reflecting the diverse perspectives of the teachers emerged through this technique.

Interpretation of Bibliographic review.

1. Question number one was: **What digital competence do you consider essential for effective English language teaching in virtual learning environments?** After interviewing five teachers, the survey yielded positive responses to the question posed. The teachers expressed that mastery of these tools is essential for developing effective digital competence. They also explained their proper use and how they would use them in class so that their students could interact with them without difficulty and feel capable of successfully completing their activities.

Furthermore, they highlighted the use of digital platforms such as Canvas, Moodle, and Google Classroom, as well as how these platforms facilitate communication in synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. These platforms are also very useful, as they help students with specific tasks such as completing exercises, recording, and publishing videos. The survey also underscored the need for teachers to combine their technological and pedagogical knowledge to teach English effectively, which will allow them to manage the teaching and learning process efficiently.

2. Question number two was: **How would you describe the importance of digital competence among EFL teachers in today's educational context?** Through the interviews, the

participants agreed that developing digital skills is extremely helpful, as it is a fundamental ability in a teacher's life and aids their English language teaching processes. They also emphasized that technology is now an essential part of our lives, especially in teaching. The teachers explained that the correct use of digital tools is crucial, stressing that it is not enough to simply know them; they must also know how to use them effectively to achieve their objectives and improve student learning, particularly in virtual environments.

Furthermore, a positive response was obtained, as the teachers also commented that developing digital competence requires practice, preparation, and planning. They also stated that their experience with virtual environments allowed them to become familiar with digital platforms and thus understand the importance of mastering these resources to avoid difficulties when teaching their classes. Finally, they pointed out that teachers must stay constantly updated because technology is advancing rapidly. This also allows them to take full advantage of all digital resources.

3. Question number third was: **Which digital competence do you use most frequently in your online teaching practice, and why?** The interviewees indicated that they use a variety of digital tools in their teaching according to the objectives of each lesson and the specific learning needs of their students. They mentioned platforms such as Padlet, Moodle, Zoom, Menti meter, Kahoot, Wordwall, and Flip, as well as artificial intelligence tools, since these significantly contribute to the development of language skills, collaborative work, assessment, and lesson preparation.

They also indicated that they select these platforms based on the skills they wish to develop in their students, such as oral expression, interactive practice, or class participation. Finally, the teachers agreed that implementing digital tools makes learning more active and student-centered. They also facilitate effective feedback for students, as there are platforms that explain content, and artificial intelligence provides further assistance with specific topics.

4. Question number fourth was: **How have you developed your digital skills throughout your teaching career?** The interviewees agreed with their opinions and stated that their digital competence has developed progressively throughout their work and professional careers. They also mentioned that the constant change and advancement in the technological field have made technological tools indispensable for updating their knowledge and strengthening their skills to achieve the goal of effective teaching. They emphasized that the development of their skills is thanks to courses, workshops, webinars, conferences, self-directed learning, and the exchange of knowledge with different colleagues.

Finally, the participants said that curiosity, a willingness to learn, and adaptation to technological changes are key to developing their digital competence. That is why they acknowledged the importance of continuous learning, as it has allowed them to integrate technological tools into their classes, activities, lessons, and group work to enrich the English language teaching process for their students.

5. Question number five was: **What challenges have you encountered while developing your digital competence for online teaching?** The participants agreed that they face various challenges when developing their digital skills for online English language teaching. Some of the

challenges they mentioned included a lack of experience when starting to use certain technological tools, the need to learn how to use different platforms, and the significant and constant emergence of new technological tools and platforms, which limits their ability to stay up to date.

The participants also expressed concerns about time constraints for experimenting with new digital tools, internet access limitations, and the availability of certain digital resources. They also agreed that while the challenges are numerous, continuous training, experience, and their willingness to learn have helped them strengthen their digital skills and integrate technology into their English language teaching process.

6. Question number six was: **What factors or opportunities have helped you improve your digital competence?** The interviewees indicated that developing their virtual skills is thanks to constant practice, continuous updating, and exploring new technological platforms. They also consider attending courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, or conferences to be very helpful, as it has allowed them to acquire new knowledge and, with it, select the digital tools to impart their knowledge to their students according to each student's needs.

They also expressed that providing support to colleagues is of great importance, since exchanging experiences with certain platforms or technological tools has facilitated their implementation in their classes. Furthermore, they agreed that the integration of digital technologies increased after the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly contributing to the

development of teachers' digital competence and the implementation of more innovative and effective teaching strategies.

7. Question number seven was: **In what ways does digital competence contribute to effective teaching in virtual learning environments?** The interviewees agreed that digital competence is fundamental, as they contribute to effective online teaching. They also believe that the correct use of digital technologies makes classes more dynamic, interactive, and student-centered, thus preventing monotony and encouraging continuous student participation in the activities planned by the teacher. This, in turn, helps create a harmonious and manageable learning environment. They also highlighted that digital skills have facilitated the creation of their classes, assessments, feedback, and communication with students.

Furthermore, digital technologies have enabled students to acquire English language knowledge more effectively. Finally, the interviewees stated that the integration of digital technologies improves the quality of language teaching and promotes continuous learning and access to more flexible, motivating, and meaningful learning experiences.

8. Question number eight was: **How does your digital competence influence students' engagement, participation, and learning outcomes?** The participants agreed that students' participation and learning outcomes are enhanced through teachers' digital competence in the classroom. They also highlighted that digital tools could create various activities that boost motivation, make classes interactive and collaborative, and thus promote the acquisition of a new language, such as English, in virtual environments. They also noted that digital platforms like

Padlet, ClassDojo, Zoom, Moodle, and Kahoot facilitate communication, teamwork, language skills practice, and immediate feedback.

However, the teachers stated that the effectiveness of the activities carried out on these platforms depends on each individual teacher. If these platforms are not used correctly, their application will not be beneficial to the teaching process. Finally, the teachers said that a combination of digital resources and active learning methodologies is very helpful when imparting knowledge, as it strengthens students' learning performance and motivation.

9. Question number nine was: **What recommendations would you make to help EFL teachers strengthen their digital competence for virtual teaching?** The interviewees recommended continuous training and participation in workshops, seminars, or conferences to strengthen their digital skills. This would allow them to stay current with digital tools and keep pace with constant technological advancements. They also mentioned the benefits of using certain platforms beforehand in the classroom, as this allows for greater confidence and effectiveness. Furthermore, they emphasized that technology should align with the teacher's objectives in delivering lessons and complement their teaching strategies, prioritizing students' needs.

Finally, the interviewees noted that knowledge sharing among colleagues regarding specific tools is extremely helpful, as many have positive experiences using them. This facilitates the ongoing exploration of new and beneficial digital platforms. Virtual platforms also allow for

the creation of more dynamic learning environments, promoting student participation and independent learning.

Below is a summary of the most relevant results obtained from the interviews with English teachers:

Table 1

Digital Competence of EFL In Virtual Learning Environments: Teachers Perceptions

Questions	How would you describe the importance of digital competence among EFL teachers in today's educational context?	What challenges have you encountered while developing your digital competence for online teaching?	How do your digital skills influence students' engagement, participation, and learning outcomes in online English classes?	What recommendations would you make to help EFL teachers strengthen their digital competence for virtual teaching?
Answers	This is of great importance since developing digital skills is fundamental in teaching and facilitates the learning process.	The lack of experience in using certain technological tools, the use of different platforms, and the emergence of new technological tools.	Digital tools allow for the creation of diverse activities that increase motivation and make classes interactive and collaborative.	Ongoing training, participation in workshops, seminars, or conferences to strengthen their digital skills

Authors	Digital competence is essential in virtual contexts. Wong(2021)	Limitations often arise such as a lack of training, little time to learn about them and the new technological tools. Moorhouse(2021)	Teachers believe that interactive platforms create a manageable environment, which in turn creates a dynamic and participatory atmosphere. Andrés(2026)	Teachers' digital skills are strengthened through training, collaboration, and institutional support. Althubyan(2024)
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Chapter V

Conclusions and recommendations

The main objective of this study was to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of their digital competence in virtual learning environments for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages program at Santa Elena Peninsula State University. After extensive research, it was found that digital competence in English language teaching is fundamental for teachers, as it has a significant positive impact on their students' knowledge acquisition through virtual tools.

Digital competence and digital technologies play a fundamental role in promoting knowledge sharing and enhancing teaching practices.

Developing digital competence is not only the responsibility of the teaching staff but also of the students, who can gain experience applicable to their future professional lives. The following section will present the research findings and provide detailed information on EFL digital competence in virtual learning environments from the perspective of teachers at Santa Elena Peninsula State University.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The qualitative research project conducted at Santa Elena Peninsula State University (UPSE), highlights digital competence in EFL teaching in virtual learning environments from the teachers' perspective. The detailed analysis of the qualitative data collected during this research clearly indicates that the use of digital technologies and the development of digital competence are highly beneficial for teaching English. The data obtained

suggest that teachers should engage in continuous learning and innovation in their to create more engaging and meaningful learning environments for students and promote self-directed learning.

Conclusion 2: The research revealed that EFL teachers consider digital competence to be a fundamental element for developing effective teaching in virtual learning environments. The findings indicate that the effective use of digital technologies facilitates lesson planning, communication with students, and the implementation of interactive teaching strategies.

Similarly, the analysis of the interviews shows that the development of digital competence is an ongoing process that depends on both the teacher's personal initiative and access to training opportunities and institutional support. Therefore, it is essential to recognize that teacher training and development in digital media are crucial for developing effective teaching practices for students.

Conclusion 3: It was also evident that although participants have strengthened their skills through practice and experience, they have also encountered challenges related to technological updates, resource limitations, and the need for continuous professional development. In conclusion, virtual education presents a challenge that teachers have had to overcome through the integration of technology. This integration has had a positive impact on students' participation, motivation, and learning outcomes in online English classes. Strengthening teachers' digital skills is presented as an improvement to the quality of teaching and a way to respond more effectively to the demands of the current digital education landscape.

Recommendations.

It is recommended that educational institutions implement several ongoing programs to support digital literacy training for teachers, with an emphasis on the pedagogical use of technological tools, innovative methodologies, and digital resources for online teaching.

It is suggested that learning communities and collaborative spaces be fostered between teachers and students, where they can share experiences, best practices, and strategies for addressing the challenges associated with the integration of digital technologies into English language teaching and learning processes, while also considering the student's perspective on teaching improvements.

It is recommended that future research broaden the scope of the study to include teachers from different educational levels and regions of the country, as diverse perspectives can lead to more accurate and comprehensive research. Similarly, incorporating the student's perspective or employing mixed-methods approaches could provide a broader understanding of the impact of digital literacy in online learning environments.

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Annexes

Annex A: Certified Anti-plagiarism System.

CERTIFICADO SISTEMA ANTI-PLAGIO

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominad

“DIGITAL COMPETENCE OF EFL TEACHERS IN VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION” o elaborado por los estudiantes **Gloria Mayerly Rivera Sarabino** 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 requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con 8 % de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe.



Atentamente

Sandra Caamaño López MSc.

Tutor

Annex B: Questionnaire

**DIGITAL COMPETENCE OF EFL IN VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:
TEACHER'S PERCEPTION**

Population: 5 English Teachers (5 English teachers from the Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, majoring in National and Foreign Languages Pedagogy)

Sample: 5 English teachers

Questions

1. What digital skills do you consider essential for effective English language teaching in virtual learning environments?
2. How would you describe the importance of digital competence for EFL teachers in today's educational context?
3. Which digital skills do you use most frequently in your online teaching practice, and why?
4. How have you developed your digital skills throughout your teaching career?
5. What challenges have you encountered while developing your digital competence for online teaching?
6. What factors or opportunities have helped you improve your digital competence?
7. In what ways does digital competence contribute to effective teaching in virtual learning environments?
8. How do your digital skills influence students' engagement, participation, and learning outcomes in online English classes?
9. What recommendations would you make to help EFL teachers strengthen their digital competence for virtual teaching?

Annex C: Interviews transcribed using the labeling method.

<i>RESULTS OF THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES</i>	<i>1. What digital skills do you consider essential for effective English language teaching in virtual learning environments?</i>	<i>2. How would you describe the importance of digital competence for EFL teachers in today's educational context?</i>	<i>3. Which digital skills do you use most frequently in your online teaching practice, and why?</i>
<i>INTERVIEWEE 1</i>	Regarding digital skills, I believe that knowledge about their use is crucial. It would be important for me, as the teacher in this case, to mention or explain which digital tools I will be using. Sometimes, students do not know how to properly use certain parts of the computer, or how to navigate different websites. So, the idea is for them to be familiar with the tools I am using and will be using, so they do not feel unable to complete the activities, which might involve specific data, synchronous or asynchronous aspects. Therefore, it is important to manage their understanding of how to use websites and the digital tools I will be using. And basically, they have a clear understanding of when they need to	Well, nowadays knowledge of this digital competence is important. Well, for the students and teachers, we must know how to use this kind of digital tool. We must be from familiar with that. I remember the first time that I used it so soon I do not like to have complications during my classes. So, I remember that before having a class with my students in this case, in high school, I practiced with a friend because it was during pandemic, so I did not know how to use Zoom. That was my first time using Zoom. So, if we prepare, if we teach, use	According to my digital skills. I tried to use this kind of tool that is more related basically. I do not know, for example, about speaking skills so I can identify what are in this case the proper tools that I need that are going to help my students to improve this skill. So basically, I must decide on some platform that they can, for example something like Flip use. These tools that can record and practice like this speech aids for example, another tool that if I teach them how they are going to use, they can receive benefits. So, I use it depending on the

	participate. There are many tools we can use in this type of learning environment, but in this case, we need to communicate which digital tools they will be using. And basically, with that, they can become familiar with, and we are going to increase their digital skills, such as knowledge. How to move from one unit to another, how to complete exercises, how to record, how to publish videos. How to use all these tools. And they can reap benefits after practicing or learning English.	the tools, practice with the tools, organize the activities that we are going to use in classes, we can manage them correctly in the classroom. We are we are not having any complications. So, it is necessary and it is important that we know as a teacher, and be updated with digital, in this case, competence. So, practice and use more tools so we can improve our classes for our students.	lesson that I have, I can use it in this case like once a week or depending on the difficulty of the lesson, or they need that they have so they need to practice. They need to practice in each session.
INTERVIEWEE 2	Well, as a teacher who works with online classes, I think a combination of technical or technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, of course, content knowledge, and digital skills is necessary. So, as a teacher, I need to know how to use and work with platforms. For example, Moodle, which is the most popular platform we use. So, it is important to know how to work with it, with all the different properties, features, and elements we can use, so that we can make it accessible to	Well, I would say that nowadays it is essential for teachers to know how to use technology in education. It is not just an option, but the foundation of pedagogy, the foundation of education. We are now building new ways of teaching or new ways of educating with the use of technology, hand in hand, as if education and technology had merged. Therefore, it is	Well, if we are talking about platforms, I mainly use Padlet, which is for collaborative activities. I also use some for gamification. I use a few tools for collaborative activities and for assessment, so Padlet is very useful for collaborative work. Sometimes I also use Word Wall, which is for practice, and sometimes I also use it for lesson assessments or short quizzes. If I want to

students. I would even say it's easy for students to get the information that I would say is one of the most important things, like how to use learning platforms like Moodle, Canvas, or Classroom, and also how to use a videoconferencing tool like Zoom, for example, and the different functions that exist in the different types. At the university, we use Zoom, and sometimes we use themes that are also part of all the platforms we are using. So, each one has its own features, its own tools, but we can use them as part of synchronous activities. I am in Zoom, and we can manage breakout rooms. We can share the screen, we can create a whiteboard, so we can use—yes, we can use—interactive whiteboards. So that is important. Another competency, I would say another skill, could be content creation, like the ability to create multimedia or create content, and research to find and adapt material that is already publicly available that we can adapt for our lessons.

important that we are competent in the use of digital tools, the different elements of technology. When we do not know or do not use technology, it is difficult to be a good teacher for online teaching, especially in virtual environments or online classes. We really need to have not only the knowledge, but also the mastery of these digital skills, how to use them, and how to use them intelligently and effectively for our classes.

brainstorm, I will use Menti meter, which is like Brainstormer for gathering ideas from students. I also use shared documents, shared information, and of course, on the Moodle platform, I use the forums, and of course, we do a lot of group work, group activities. So that is what I use most when I am with my students.

INTERVIEWEE 3	I consider that the most essential digital skills are the ability to use virtual learning platforms, manage video conferences, tools, create interactive materials, and evaluate students online and the last maybe that I'm considering this case is the communicate effectively through digital channels as an professors we need to consider that or a student have different and different use of platform, different use of the technology. So EFL professors also need to know how to multimedia resources, collaborative tools and educational applications and support students' language learning processes through digital or through technology because it is different to working face-to-face classes to work in online environment.	Digital competence is very important because education has changed significantly and teachers need to adapt to the virtual and blending learning environments. Nowadays, we are talking about blending environments and virtual environments. This is online environments for EFL professors or teachers, digital competence allowed to design more interactive lessons, provide better feedback, use authentic materials, and promote the most important common. Through technology, it is not only about the use of tools, but also about using them with a clear pedagogical purpose.	I use various digital platforms, but I consider one of my most frequently used digital skills to be managing virtual platforms for creating presentations, online quizzes, sharing multimedia materials, and organizing collaborative activities. I use these skills with students because When I discovered these skills, they helped make my classes more dynamic, instead of the teacher just lecturing the whole time. With these kinds of digital skills, or something similar, that I use in my classes, I am able to engage my students.
INTERVIEWEE 4	I think it is interesting, but essential for effective English. It depends on the skills you are developing with your students. Not all the digital materials we have are for all aspects of English. We must identify whether they are	Teachers need to stay up-to-date, and we must constantly update our skills because technology advances every day, and as teachers, we must adapt to this progress. That is	I do not have an online subject. My subjects are face to face. But even that I use digital skills. I love to use Padlet because with the Padlet you can do different activities.

	needed for reading or writing, so they might be effective for one thing and for other skills. It depends on.	why, for me, digital tools that we can find online are truly important. It is not easy for any teacher, but we must learn to be like we are in our daily lives. If our students, teenagers, children, and even adults—know how to use technology, we, as teachers, must do the same.	Even students can record videos. Everything, you can do lots of activities and all the students can see the activities that everybody is doing. I also use Menti Meter when I need some comments from the students, I like to use the videos some questionnaires quizzes that can be, I think, easy. And we must use and we must learn how to use artificial intelligence.
INTERVIEWEE 5	I believe that teachers of English as a foreign language need a special combination of digital, technological, and pedagogical skills. They know that essential skills include the ability to use learning management systems, such as Moodle or Google Classroom. For me, delivering synchronous classes through platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams allows for the creation of interactive learning materials, the use of online assessment tools, and the integration of multimedia resources into lessons. Furthermore, digital	I believe that digital competence has become an indispensable professional skill for teaching English as a foreign language. In today's educational context, technology, especially for teachers, facilitates communication, collaboration, and creative access to educational resources, as well as the use of authentic language materials. Therefore, a teacher with strong digital	In my online teaching practice, I frequently use videos, especially for video conferencing platforms, in addition to providing information. In this case, Zoom has a learning management system like Moodle and the Moodle Works Workspace applications. Students can consult this system to analyze and practice with interactive assessment tools such as

communication, information literacy, and virtual classroom management are fundamental. This is essential for maintaining student engagement and facilitating meaningful language learning.

competence can design more engaging lessons, personalize instruction, and provide immediate feedback to students, whether in the classroom or online. This facilitates learning regardless of the process or geographical limitations and empowers teachers to respond effectively to the growing demand for online learning.

Kahoot or quizzes. Other collaborative platforms include Padlet and Wumbox, which are very instructive. Of course, there are also AI tools, special technological tools for lesson preparation, such as those used by a teacher for a student. These tools promote interaction and encourage active participation. Students can provide standardized feedback to themselves, other students, or teachers. All of this contributes to making English language learning more engaging and student-centered.

<i>RESULTS OF THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES</i>	<i>4. How have you developed your digital skills throughout your teaching career?</i>	<i>5. What challenges have you encountered while developing your digital competence for online teaching?</i>	<i>6. What factors or opportunities have helped you improve your digital competence?</i>
<i>INTERVIEWEE 1</i>	Well, I consider that they have developed a lot during my whole teaching career all this year. I have been an English teacher since 2014 officially, so I consider that it is different from 2000 and 2014 now 2026 so I consider that I have developed more even more this kind of aspect with my classes online. So, it is necessary that as a teacher we must update our knowledge in various kinds of skills and even more digital that has increased a lot in the last in this case, in this year's using the technology aspects more frequently.	Well, at the beginning it was a little difficult, perhaps because I do not know. As I mentioned I was not familiar with this kind of tool, so the basic challenge could be to know how to manage and use a specific digital tool. So could be like in that specific moment, I was not ready to use this kind of I do not know digital tools that would be one of the most difficult and one of the aspects. The challenge that I can mention because after you practice, after you as a teacher decide what are the tools that you are going to use in each session. It is easy for in this case; it was easy for me to identify how I was going to develop that specific digital competence in my online	I consider that practice, as I mentioned, is different from the past that kind of a skill that they have so opportunities to practice, opportunities to watch and be updated. I do not know, attend seminars. I do not know this kind of workshop that can give us the opportunity to help us to improve our knowledge. Using different tools is not the same as using one tool today that helps in 2-3 years. So, they are going to change a lot. So, using and applying and verifying if the tool it was the best or it's the best for the, for my students the level and I don't know the material that they have the specific background that they have, so they can in this case help me

		teaching classes. So, it was easier after I learned how to use them properly	to use and improve my classes using that the opportunity in these kind of aspects that can help to increase the level of my classes through digital tools.
INTERVIEWEE 2	Well, it has been a mother of constant learning. First, you know, when we start our Carrer, we know the basics we know how to use some tools, how to use some we know about technology. But during the years, we can see lately there are lots of advancements, it is experience. It is also curiosity. It is the way that we want to integrate some other new things into our classes. So, I can say it is more from my experience, from my practice, like in classes. And of course, I try to like trying a new tool analyzing if tool has works with the group or not. But, I have of course we learn on the way we learn from	OK, so it is mostly the like technology is coming with so many tools, with many different tools that sometimes it can be overwhelming. There are tools that are good and motivating, engaging to the students, but sometimes you cannot cope with all the different tools that are. So, it is like. There are more tools, ones that you start using a tool, there is a new one and there is a new one. And sometimes you do not have much time to really work with one tool and there is already another one. So, that can be one of the challenges like keeping up with the technological tools and of course the time	OK. I would say mostly it is pure collaboration like we talk sometimes with our colleagues. We talk with colleagues. We share some tools or we share some information. So that is that is useful because when we are analyzing or we share what is happening in our classes or maybe one colleague is using a new tool and then he suggests or recommends. So, we would start by exploring. So that will be one, one thing like peer collaboration because we share the information between colleagues and among colleagues and we can give some feedback about a tool or an application. Also, there is

	other teachers; we learn some other information or new things sometimes at webinars or in conferences. So, it is like we start engaging with other practices, I follow a website that is especially useful. This is BBC English and they usually have different webinars or conferences that I like. I attended these conferences and I learned something new from them. What I do is try to experience or try a tool in the classroom.	constraints because we do not always have the time to explore all the tools. Another thing is managing, the like sometimes the digital fatigue, let us call this way because sometimes we can be overwhelmed with technology. There are so many things that we can do, but we can see that sometimes there is not that much to probe things. So that can be that can be some challenges.	the institution also because there are some courses, some conferences for professional development, and workshops that are focused on the use of technology, the use of artificial intelligence in teaching. So, the workshops and conferences would be another, another aspect.
<i>INTERVIEWEE 3</i>	In this case, I developed my digital skills through professional training I attend or through online courses and institutional workshops. I am always practicing detachment from the internet, new platforms, and new strategies, especially since I'm always in contact with technology. This experience has been especially important to me because each	One of the biggest challenges has been internet connectivity issues because we don't always have a good connection. Sometimes students say, "Professor, you have internet access, because I've noticed mine is down. Or is there internet access?" Lack of training is a starting point, as is limited access to different technological resources	Maybe the training that I do the different courses, the different training that I do always helps me to improve my competence all the time I'm trying to research information. If I don't know how to use a platform, I don't know how to solve a problem. I research information on the Internet; I watch videos on YouTube. I am sharing ideas

	online class I teach gives me the opportunity to identify many different areas of wasted work.	because you must pay to use these platforms. The time required to learn how to use new tools is another challenge, as is selecting the right tool to work with students technologically because not all devices are compatible with those platforms. This topic has many facets.	with other teachers and maybe they have the solution for the problem. So, there's no use this app, these are all the apps. So, there's diverse ways that I try to improve my digital competencies, and I improve my digital skills too.
<i>INTERVIEWEE 4</i>	Well, it wasn't easy. First, you must learn how to use a computer because I'm not young, so we must learn how to use a computer and how you progress with the different skills you must learn later. We can find the tools on the internet, but through training courses. I've learned through training courses and from other teachers who have these skills very well developed, and I even ask for help now. I've asked my younger colleagues for help because they know how to use it, and I learned,	Well, at first, it was exceedingly difficult because I had to learn, but I also asked my students if they knew how to do it, and they taught me because they have the skill in their native language. Another challenge is when you click the wrong way and you don't know how to fix it. I also write, take notes, and must read them. How do we use it today to register for conferences, for courses—for many things we have to do online, and they send you to different platforms, and not all	I think the ease of using the internet in my free time allows me to explore new things I've heard about and try to practice with them. For example, now that we have the different artificial intelligences that exist, people say, "I don't like using this, use that," and I try to do it by asking myself questions: What can this artificial intelligence do for me? How can it help me? And it helps a lot, but we also must verify that the documents, links, or information we receive from them are

	but I think this is also a skill that everyone has. There are other teachers for whom it's not easy to use digital tools, but with practice and training, we can use them.	platforms are the same, so we have to avoid making mistakes by doing the activity very slowly. But I think that's a challenge because each platform is different. They have some similarities, but they can be confusing. According to people, and that happens to me.	accurate. I think that's an opportunity, but it's not 100% certain. So, I think having the internet at home is a fantastic opportunity, or having the internet at work here at the university is also an opportunity because we can explore and practice with the different tools that exist.
INTERVIEWEE 5	I consider that according my experience, I have developed my digital competency through continuous professional development but I have participated in online courses, webinars and also I consider that teachers need special training workshops, conferences and self-directive learning according with his or her professional also this permit to improve our skills in my case, by experimenting all the time with some news educational technologies and at the same time collaborating	I believe that some of the main challenges include adapting to rapidly or constantly changing technologies, and there are also limitations and limited time for professional development, sometimes related to internet connectivity. There are some negative aspects to the service I like, such as technical difficulties during online classes, which is a negative aspect, and learning to integrate technology effectively, sometimes in the pedagogical aspect. But I	In my case, I can say that several factors have contributed to my digital experience and competence, including institutional training programs, online certification courses, professional learning communities, peer collaboration, educational conferences, and access to digital teaching resources. My experience was strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, I accelerated my digital learning and was encouraged to explore innovative teaching strategies

with my colleague or my partners or my students sometimes and these have reflecting on my own teaching the professional perspective and apart from that, knowing some interesting tools or resources According with my experience, I continuous practicing and I am very curiosity. I have also been an essential predisposition to adapt to technological changes and that is the most important and teachers can encourage students to develop those specific skills.

believe that digital tools have increased a lot, and it has been ensured that all students have equal access to technology and digital resources, but that depends on the educational institutions and their responsibility, and of course, on their own homes where the responsibility lies with the students.

and modern pedagogical approaches.

<i>RESULTS OF THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES</i>	<i>7. In what ways does digital competence contribute to effective teaching in virtual learning environments?</i>	<i>8. How do your digital skills influence students' engagement, participation, and learning outcomes in online English classes?</i>	<i>9. What recommendations would you make to help EFL teachers strengthen their digital competence for virtual teaching?</i>
<i>INTERVIEWEE 1</i>	I consider that the year is necessary because if we are talking about virtual learning environment it is necessary to be familiar with digital competence. If we just go and share a screen or I don't know we don't use any kind of presentation. I just share a document, a Word document and explain something. I consider that there won't be any kind of engagement with my students with the classes. So, it's necessary that digital competence be familiar with this, use many tools. I am trying to check TikTok or as I mentioned, attend seminars, workshops, webinars to know more about these kinds of tools that I can use in virtual	As I mentioned before, it's important because of these aspects to use these kinds of digital tools. Using my digital skills, I can create this kind of connection with my students. I can identify the best way for them to participate. For example, you might remember that I've heard from other teachers that some students don't participate much. So, for example, I'm now also teaching English through Matriz, which is online. Sometimes everyone raises their hand, and I must continue, "Okay, if you want to participate, ClassDojo, remember?" So, I create participation using ClassDojo. You remember ClassDojo. So,	The basic recommendation would be that it's necessary to practice with the tools we can identify beforehand, because if we don't practice while teaching, we may have difficulties using them and we'll waste time updating these digital tools. This is especially true for the many digital tools we can use in our classes. Therefore, we can identify ways to help in this case, such as attending workshops and seminars, so we can update our knowledge not only for ourselves, but also by discussing these important tools with other teachers. I believe that if we do not analyze our teaching methods and evaluate how we are

	learning because it is different for face-to-face classes. So, I can improve, I can ask that they peace, that they can run, that they can do various aspects. So, in a virtual learning environment. I consider that it is necessary that we always update our tools, our way of teaching, because on the other hand, our students are going to get bored, and they are not going to learn anything during our classes.	I try to find a way to motivate and encourage students to participate. And obviously, if they practice, if they want to participate, they use a tool. They use an online website, Speech Ace, or other software or something digital. It can significantly help the learning that comes from my students in these online English classes, so I think it's great. Yes, it's important to create all of these. Variable aspects: Variables necessary to analyze if we want to be successful in our English classes.	teaching, we'll continue with the same class for two, three, or four years, and we'll do the same thing for all four years. But with all these technological aspects, this technological advancement, it's necessary for each period—this year it's a semester, this school year. It's necessary to update our knowledge in this type of digital competence so that our classes are more beneficial for other students and they can develop their second language acquisition skills.
INTERVIEWEE 2	Well, I think digital competencies allow the teacher to transform. A space or a virtual space into like a student-centered class. Especially because in virtual lessons or online classes, students are the ones who develop their autonomy in learning. So, digital	Okay. I think they all have participation and learning outcomes in common, and it's about putting in the best effort, or at least encouraging participation. To encourage participation, I would say that tools, usually games, are used instead of simply presenting the class as a lecture but also	Okay, I think there's something important here because, as I mentioned in another question, there are just too many new tools. Sometimes we want to try them all. But I would say it's important to focus more on the content, and if we're clear on that, we can use different

competencies help us to transform this area and to provide students with a big overview and some help with their learning. Let's see, we can provide students with structured contents but also gives students the freedom to develop their autonomy. So, for example, if I provide a video to reinforce a topic, the student has also the opportunity to analyze or to see another type of material. If I provide exercise or practice or games for students so they can have these like extra activities also or reinforcing activities. And I can do that all on the same platform, on the Moodle platform.

engaging the students. As I mentioned, on Padlet, for example, they can write their comments. Or if I use an activity on Word Wall, we complete the activity online, review it, and give feedback. In this way, students become more involved by participating in the activity, whether it's navigating, creating a lesson, or collaborating on different activities. For example, when they are asked questions or interact, student participation is encouraged.

tools. I would say we could have a set of tools for making videos. We can use a specific tool and have the students familiarize themselves with it as well. If I'm using it for exams, I might use another tool, like having a list of the most important tools I would use and their purpose. If I use Padlet, for example, Padlet is on my list of tools for collaborative teaching. So, I think I would recommend preparing the content, like the pedagogy, and then the tools. It's also important to try implementing the tools one by one, not all at once, because as technology advances, there's something new every day. And, unfortunately, we can't use them all in our classes. And I think another idea or recommendation would be that, as teachers, we participate in seminars, conferences, and webinars to

			learn and share what we do in our classes, so that we can build a knowledge network and improve our teaching practice.
<i>INTERVIEWEE 3</i>	Digital skills benefit me as a teacher because they help me plan my lessons, organize my resources, and perhaps give me the opportunity to give them an impact, provide good feedback to my students, evaluate my students, and maintain communication through emails, Moodle, EVA, and have the opportunity to create different environments for my students. When teachers use technology, students can practice English in diverse ways and have access to more learning opportunities.	I believe my digital skills influence my students' participation because they help me create interactive and motivating activities, for example, using videos, games, online discussions, and collaborative documents. I encourage students to participate more actively in the classroom—when we're on Zoom, when we're working on an activity together, or even when we're in class. This supports students learning because they can practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing dramas using different digital resources.	Maybe I recommend EFL teachers to participate in more continuous training because technology changes all the time. We have new platform with time we have new strategies to work in online classes explore new educational tools and reflect on how technology can support learning training. Not is the same to teaching face to face classes, to teaching online classes. Sometimes there are professors that say that students don't turn on cameras. If they don't turn on cameras, they can learn. So, we need to try to adapt all that support to our classes and it's important to share experience with the students with all the professors

			to create feedback for students and then maybe that will help all the professors, I consider that part.
INTERVIEWEE 4	Practice, especially writing and reading, is much simpler, since we can find texts with exercises without needing teachers to read them and create the questions. Now, with just two access points for students to complete their exercises, it's much easier. Before, we had to ask teachers, read, and prepare the questions ourselves, which was very time-consuming. Now, for a teacher, it's much more efficient because we can create exercises and practical activities in minutes thanks to digital skills.	Well, if the teacher varies the activities, varies the different tools available, they can attract or capture a student's attention. For example, I use Padlet, but not every day, only sometimes, because Padlet is for this activity, but we can use another tool for another activity, and that can engage students because digital skills make it easier for them to find answers. But if the teacher is creative in how they apply these tools, that can help a lot. For me, it's not about finding this exercise on the internet or on this platform or tool and doing it, because students just copy and paste, and the internet provides the answer effortlessly. I think the teacher should be creative in applying	Well, I can add that nowadays it's quite common to find training courses, many of them even free. So, my recommendation is to stay updated by taking courses, searching online for what's new every day. We can even find announcements about new tools on social media. For example, a few months ago Canva was especially useful, but now artificial intelligence can even create beautiful slides for you. So, how can we use these tools? By learning through training, by finding courses that help us strengthen these skills. As English teachers, we have to stay updated all the time. There are even tests we can find online, but what tools help us? What

		technology and engaging students in the classroom.	is an effective test, an effective exam for our students? So, I think that's what training and practice online all are about.
INTERVIEWEE 5	Let me tell you something: adapting to digital competence contributes significantly to effective online teaching by allowing teachers to design engaging lessons. This facilitates better communication and fosters collaboration with students by providing timely feedback. Remember, teachers and students work together, and this allows for continuous monitoring of student progress. It also supports differentiated instruction, and these institutions agree that it increases learning autonomy, which is crucial. It engages students, sometimes by motivating them through interactive and multimedia learning experiences. Finally,	Okay, let me tell you a little about my own skills, but I believe my digital skills have a significant impact on my students, especially on their engagement, participation, and learning outcomes. I also believe it's necessary to integrate digital tools like Zoom, Google Classroom, Moodle, Kahoot, quizzes, and, you know, Padlet. Of course, this is necessary for collaboration, or perhaps for working together collaboratively. For example, these platforms are wonderful, but I can create interactive, student-centered learning experiences, and you and all the teachers can too, using these technologies. For example, to encourage active	I recommend that teachers of English as a foreign language participate in ongoing professional development programs focused on educational technology, rather than learning to use digital tools only when they need them. It is also important to share experiences with colleagues and explore different platforms through regular practice. Developing digital competence is an ongoing process and staying up-to-date helps teachers create more engaging and effective virtual learning environments.

digital integration improves both the quality of teaching and the overall language learning of students.

participation through discussions, questioning a concept or theory, a textbook discussion, quizzes, breakout rooms, sometimes collaborative projects—that's wonderful for me—and multimedia activities. Remember that in this case, the functionality of these aspects is fantastic for the teaching and learning process.
