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Relato de Experiência

Extensionist Practice In The Middle Of The Pandemic: Analysis Of Students' Perceptions In A Spanish Conversation Course

Valesca Brasil Irala, Leandro Blass, Fabiana Campos de Borba Vincent[1]

Abstract

This text aims to present an account of teaching experience mobilized within the scope of university extension, started in March and concluded in June 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The field of knowledge is on Spanish language focused on teaching conversation classes. The methodological procedures adopted are described and problematized, as well as reflections on the didactic material elaborated for the specific context of the pandemic, through the Canva platform, and the production of videos for YouTube following the principles of microlearning. Furthermore, reflections are made on the duration time of synchronous classes (which, in the case of this experience, occurred using Google Meet provided by the university), the ideal number of students for this type of proposal and what is the role of using WhatsApp during the process. The experience is reported through the student point of view, through the synthesis of the responses from an anonymous questionnaire available at the end of the course, statistically comparing the set of perceptions regarding the model adopted. The results show that the teacher-student interaction was the best rated item and the worst rated was pre-registration disseminate.

[1] Federal University of Pampa (Campus Bagé). Research Group on Learning, Methodologies and Assessment (GAMA / CNPq).

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Introduction

The extension practices developed by universities have as their central motto the establishment of a link between higher level institutions and society, beyond institutional walls. However, the pandemic scenario installed in 2020 forged the need to reformulate a set of academic procedures and, among them, strategic models for conducting extension practices. The Covid-19 pandemic, far from being a strictly epidemiological problem (ARRUDA, 2020; PARDO KUKLINSKI; COBO, 2020), affected numerous dimensions of human life, as well as impacting in different ways the different productive sectors of society.

As pointed out by Diniz et al. (2020), among the questions emerging from March 2020, for many professors, questions were raised about what to do and how to help in some way in the face of the established scenario, based on the expertise of each professional in your area of training. Although some extension practices developed in many universities were more focused on the creation of personal protective equipment (PPE) and alcohol gel, contemplating an urgent functional demand for the moment, actions of other natures were necessary, especially to seek to meet a need more subjective, but equally relevant that emerged for most people: occupational demand (especially with the onset of the lockdown in the first weeks of the pandemic).

In view of this no less sensitive aspect, an online extension course entitled "Conversation in Spanish in times of pandemic" was proposed at a multi campus university located in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul, aimed at adults with different linguistic levels in the language studied, which was intended to propose oral development based on contemporary themes, among which were the pandemic itself and other themes of a personal and social nature.

The objective of this article is to analyze the students' perceptions (INGOLD, 2010) about the course in question, from its initial

stage (disclosure), through the didactic strategies adopted (FERRARI; SÁENZ, 2018) and the aspects related to interaction (LEFFA , 2006), in order to map which among the listed points were those that presented the most critical and also the most favorable results, in the view of the students. With this study, it is intended to contribute to the advancement in the design of other extension experiences in the field of online language teaching.

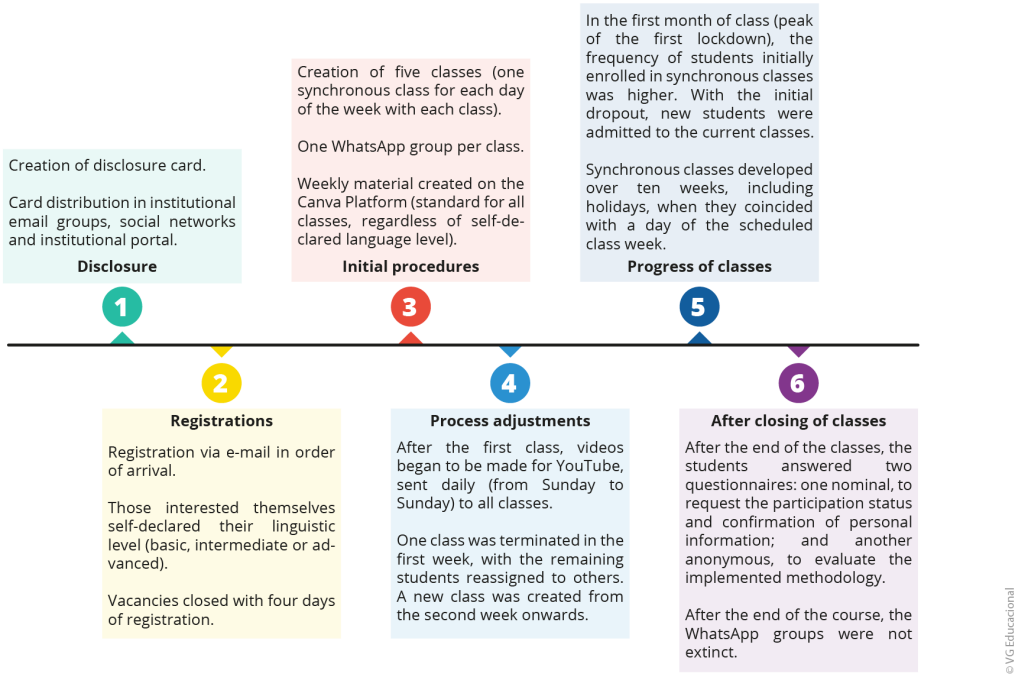
It is considered that, even in a post-pandemic period, it is necessary to adopt and improve approaches similar to those undertaken in the course in question, but with greater planning - which was not possible at the time it was offered (between March and June 2020), because it fits into what is conventionally called emergency remote learning, which, conceptually, cannot be confused with the model of online education itself (BARBOUR et al., 2020).

Next, some assumptions that contextualize the didactic-theoretical choices made in the extension course under analysis will be presented and, after that, the research methodology and the discussion of results will be described.

Didactic-theoretical contextualization

Figure 1 shows a timeline created to help contextualize the dynamics of the course "Conversation in times of pandemic", which will be the focus of the analysis undertaken (the total duration of the course was ten consecutive weeks). From the elements informed in the timeline, the relevant didactic-theoretical justifications to understand the choices made will be presented, which were evaluated through the perceptions (INGOLD, 2010) of the students at the end of the course. It is important to say that, in the view of anthropologist Tim Ingold, the concept of perception is not reduced to a mentalist perspective, but has an agentive character, conforming and updating context-sensitive performance patterns.

Figure 1 - Timeline of the extension course "Conversation in times of pandemic"



Source: Own authorship (2020).

One of the theoretical foundations on which the extension course was built is the alignment with the epistemology of complexity (MORIN, 2003), given the relevance of its reflection for the context and for the realistic purposes that were at stake in its proposition at the beginning of the pandemic. For the author, complexity is permeated both by imperfection and uncertainty, as well as by processes and counter-processes. As an example, it was adopted as a counter-process to what normally occurs in extension courses offered in person by the university, which is the focus of the analysis, the fact that, when requesting registration, students should self-declared the linguistic level they considered themselves able to attend, and not go through a hetero-evaluative interview (ORÉ, 2018) to determine the level, as usually occurred.

The groups were forged in the light of this individual perceptual direction, and as the applications were received, by e-mail, by the ministering teacher, five groups were formed (one for each day of the week). Three of them were oriented to students who declared themselves at the basic level and two, formed by students who declared themselves at the

intermediate/advanced levels, preferably grouped by age and functional profiles (for example, undergraduate students, professors, university graduates, external community etc.).

For greater detail in the characterization of the graduated classes, there is the following overview: a) Monday class (mostly composed of technical servers, external community and university professors, aged over 30 years and with some level of prior knowledge of the language); b) Tuesday class (university professors, aged between 30 and 50 years, with prior knowledge of the language at an intermediate to advanced level); c) Wednesday class (undergraduate and graduate students, with the majority age group under 30 years old, with prior knowledge of the language at the basic level); d) Thursday class, formed from the second week of class (a more heterogeneous class in terms of education, as it encompassed both undergraduate students, the external community and university professors; in terms of prior knowledge of the target language, there was both intermediate and basic level students); e) Friday class (mainly formed by graduates or students of the Licentiate Degree in Arts, with a diversity of linguistic levels).

The student, upon having his registration confirmed, received by e-mail a guidance material designed to guide the specifics of synchronous meetings. The principles that guided that initial conception (formulated "emergency") are presented and discussed below.

The first principle was related to the non-sequentiality of the contents, as usually occurs in a face-to-face extension course offered at the university in question. The decision not to offer a formal and sequential course, as was done in the past, revealed, in this experience, a possibility of experiencing a set of characteristics presented by complex systems, discussed in language acquisition research, first in a seminal text by Larsen -Freeman (1997), with adhesion in Brazil by several researchers in the field of language. A complex system is non-linear, unpredictable, open and adaptive (FIALHO, 2012; LEFFA, 2009; PAIVA, 2014; VETROMILLE-CASTRO, 2007). Such characteristics described in the literature were observed over the weeks of classes.

On a more functional level, some applicants never attended any synchronous class, although they confirmed the registration (two classes formed essentially by undergraduate students were merged after the first class, with a new class oriented to basic level being opened from the second week onwards from the beginning of the course). Faced with this phenomenon of evasion, or pre-evasion, of students who, although they had confirmed their enrollment, did not attend the course or attended it only at the beginning, the possibility was created for other students to join the groups over time , without any harm to the process because they started at a later time, since there was no sequentiality in the planning of the content (an element that also allows inserting the proposal in the constitutive characteristics of a complex system).

These characteristics are also identified by the establishment of a reassessment regarding the belief in the search for standardization of a previous linguistic level, as in more than one group there were people who had never studied Spanish previously together with others who had previous regular, formal or informal contact, with the tongue. This heterogeneity, normally seen as negative by most teachers in many language classes, was not considered a problem in the conversation course taught.

The students were also instructed about the need for spontaneity of speech (that is, without establishing written notes prior to oral expression), the loss of shame and that there was cooperation with the interactional process, so that silence was avoided. It is fair to say that most of the observations were created based on previous experiences in teaching scenarios with an emphasis on oral production in a face-to-face context and on discussions in the literature in the area (BARROS; IRALA, 2012; BERGSLEITHNER; WEISSHEIMER; MOTA, 2011; IRALA, 2012; OLIVEIRA, 2017).

Without going into these aspects, the guidelines were built as an "anticipation" of problems that usually manifest themselves in a classroom regarding oral production, especially related to fear, shame and resistance to speaking by some students. In the case of conversation classes taught remotely in the context of extension, such aspects were not detected, revealing themselves as a positive feature of the technological mediation tool for this category of activity. It was also noted

that the belief that it is necessary to "write" before speaking, as a strategy to mediate speech through writing (thus limiting spontaneity), was identified in a very small number of students compared to which was observed in conversation classes previously taught by the teacher in face-to-face teaching.

Another important principle was related to the positive understanding of the error and the receipt of teacher feedback regarding it. Following the discussions made by Winstone, Pitt and Nash (2020), so that feedback can become more effective, it is important to invest in student co-responsibility in decision making to achieve better results. The strategy that seems to have been more productive to contribute in this aspect was the production of videos for YouTube, related to the most sensitive linguistic points that were being identified in the classes or even anticipating difficulties that could appear in the practice of the vocabulary required in subsequent classes.

The videos were built based on the principles of microlearning, synthesized from Buhu and Buhu (2019): a) size: short videos (they revolve around a minute and a half in length; for editing these videos, the platform is used Powtoon); b) focus: conciseness to present the content, with a view to capturing the student's attention; c) compact: elimination of usual elements, such as introductory discussions; d) relevant context: the closest to reality, focused on immediate applicability. The videos were published daily, from Sunday to Sunday, throughout the period the course was in progress, and shared with each of the groups via WhatsApp.

Although the YouTube channel receives other visitors, in addition to students enrolled in conversation classes, it was possible to identify the co-responsibility of students to follow the proposed feedback through the channel's content, either through comments on the videos in the groups of WhatsApp, explicit mention of the content (especially lexical) covered in class, as well as through the evident progress of students in terms of confidence in the use of emphasized words, class after class. Self-correction strategies were also identified, especially in the last synchronous encounters.

The teaching materials used as support, sent weekly in synchronous pre-class, were all created on the Canva platform, which, as described by Gehred (2020, p. 338-339), is "a graphic design tool" of an "intuitive and friendly" nature for the user". One of the most interesting resources used is the possibility of integrating videos into the material itself (either videos created by the teacher — in this case, just one, a tutorial designed for students to access Google Meet for the first time — or videos previously made available for discussions , in particular short films or animated films used to promote class discussions).

The materials were shared in the WhatsApp group and accessed directly through the link (URL) provided, without having to download any files, in addition to allowing them to adjust the font size and being fully adaptable to access via mobile device. However, some students requested the possibility of having the material also available in PDF format, justifying that, in this way, they could print it. Another advantage is that it could be adjusted in real time, that is, even if the student had already accessed a preliminary version, after class the teacher was free to add or remove information, without the need to resend the material, because, if the student accessed it after class, it would be updated with additions or subtractions, as appropriate.

When starting the course, it was unclear whether the same videoconferencing tool would always be maintained for the weekly synchronous classes or whether others would be tested. However, as Google Meet, in the institution that is the focus of the analysis, it is associated with the institutional email and was maintained throughout all meetings as the most viable tool for classes. A democratic consultation was carried out with the students about the possibility of testing other tools, but there was no unanimity regarding the use of these other alternatives.

Also at the beginning, students were instructed to leave audio and video enabled throughout the class period, since, in the case of a conversation class, the design of the activities provided for constant interaction between the participants. There was no rejection of the established principle, with the exception of rare opportunities in which a student reported that he was attending the class while he was working, or even because there was noise of construction work in his surroundings. The

concept of interaction adopted here is that of Leffa (2006, p. 181), who defines it as "a contact that produces change in each of the participants". In the author's view, interaction is always goal-oriented, which is capable of moving each participant in the scenario of the proposed learning activities; in this scenario, the content to be learned emerges as a key element of the student-teacher-object triad, to ensure the interactional functioning and the construction of learning in a more productive way.

Regarding the role assigned to WhatsApp (both as a communication tool and as a quick content distribution tool), it is clear that initial expectations were extrapolated. According to Chahal et al. (2019), some of the benefits of using WhatsApp in education can be, among others: a) promoting unity among members of a group; b) speed of connectivity; c) ease of use; d) is a good resource for recalling information about days, dates and times. All of these benefits were identified over the weeks of classes, as, with regard to unity among the group members, it constituted a community of practice (ABIODUN et al., 2020), especially in some classes, students came from from different cities, as the university is multicampi, and most have never seen each other in person, but until the end of classes (and, in some cases, even later), the idea of unity could be verified in the interaction strategies and in the resource humor present with some regularity in the classes - some more and others less -, as well as the fact that students remain in the WhatsApp group, even with the purpose of its creation finished (that is, even after the end of classes).

The last principle, which warned students to be patient with the teacher, showed, at the beginning of the course, to be an indication of their insecurity in relation to the functioning of the classes. To some extent, it also indicated a certain disbelief that the constitutive elements for the smooth running of the course could be satisfactory, either because of her inexperience in activities of this nature (the teacher in question had never acted as a teacher in other contexts other than face-to-face) , either due to any unpredictable technological problems (in your devices or your connection).

Returning to the design of the didactic materials created, they were designed based on thematic axes, in order to meet the contextualization

criteria, according to the reality they might be experiencing during the pandemic, or the reflection in relation to the broader social context. An example of immediate context was the inclusion, in the material of the first classes, of a photo of the shortage of products in the local supermarket, due to the pandemic, so that students could debate about it. Regarding the broader social context, the discussion on the global unemployment scenario can be mentioned, based on data from the International Labor Organization regarding the impacts of Covid-19 on different productive sectors in all continents. In classes, when the pandemic was not brought into didactic planning, the students themselves thematized it, through the answers to a question asked by the teacher or, even when they themselves were encouraged to create questions for others.

Methodology

After the ten weeks with each class, two questionnaires were sent to them: an anonymous one, to evaluate the course (which will have its questions detailed below); and another with nominal identification, to request a certificate of participation, in which they were also asked to inform the city in which they were located and the institutional link with the university.

At the end, 37 participants requested proof of participation in the course (even those who attended the beginning or at least half of the course - an open possibility in this remote modality, as in face-to-face courses it is necessary to present 75% of attendance to be entitled to certification) and, of this total, 37 people also answered the anonymous questionnaire until June 13, 2020. Potentially, 55 people could request a certificate of participation (the ideal average number of students in each of the five groups formed for each day of the week was ten students per class, although this number was higher in the first weeks in some classes and decreased gradually after the end of the lockdown, which corresponded to about a month of classes). It can be said that the responses obtained are representative, as they mean that 67% of potential respondents made their assessment. In all, people who were in 14 different cities in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and in two cities in the state of São Paulo participated in the course.

Based on these data, it was found that most respondents were undergraduate students from the institution itself (17); followed by the institution's professors (11); technicians in educational matters (4); graduate graduates (2); graduate graduates (1); graduate students (2); and people without a formal link with the university (4).

Regardless of the student's self-declared proficiency level (basic, intermediate or advanced), the teaching material created for the classes was identical for all classes. The adaptations in relation to the use of the material produced in Canva took place in the context of oral verbal interaction and in the degree of use of chat during classes, as chat was used more frequently in classes with more beginner students. to introduce vocabulary and immediate correction of the difficulties of pronunciation presented was also carried out. The chat content was then complemented with some translation or highlighting some aspect of pronunciation and forwarded to students in WhatsApp groups. This practice was not foreseen in the initial model proposed by the professor, but was introduced based on a student's request and disseminated for adoption in all five groups.

The anonymous questionnaire consisted of eight satisfaction questions, in which students should assign a score from 1 to 10 to the following aspects: a) dissemination strategies for the course; b) teaching material produced in Canva; c) daily videos posted on YouTube; d) topics addressed; e) duration of synchronous classes; f) teaching strategies in synchronous classes; g) teacher-student interaction; h) student(s)-student(s) interaction. Didactic strategies are understood here as "facilitators of the process", based on a diverse set of possibilities carried out by teachers to generate better quality and innovative teaching (FERRARI; SÁENZ, 2018, p. 366).

Complementary questions about attendance in synchronous classes and another related to possible reasons for absences were also contemplated. Still, there was a question related to the existence or not of technological problems for monitoring the classes. A question was added about the use of WhatsApp to the detriment of other possible tools and for which functions, such as the Moodle platform or e-mail for making materials available. As an open question, they were asked which topics

they liked the most and which they didn't. Finally, there was space for suggestions and final comments.

The software used was SPSS® (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), version 18. For the satisfaction questions, analyzes were performed involving measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode); descriptive statistical dispersion measures (standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum); Shapiro-Wilk normality tests, to check if the sample has a normal distribution; and non-parametric Mann-Whitney test to check whether or not there are differences between the studied groups (FIELD, 2009). The results are presented for each group, emphasizing the levels of satisfaction indicated from the students' perceptions and, in a complementary way, contextual observations indicated by the professor, when pertinent. The internal consistency of the questions was estimated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (CRONBACH, 1951). After the methodological detailing, in the next section, we will present the analysis of the results.

Results and discussions

Table 1 shows the results of the reliability test performed in the SPPS using the Cronbach's Alpha method, for the eight satisfaction questions present in the questionnaire.

Table 1 - Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Number of questions -N	Cronbach's Alpha
8	0,78

Source: Own authorship (2020).

The classification of the result of Cronbach's Alpha can be found in Souza, Alexandre and Guirardello (2017, p. 665), who report that several "studies determine that values above 0.7 are ideal". Table 2 represents descriptive statistics and central tendency data for the eight questions related to quantitative data, that is, number of respondents (N), mean (M), median (Me), mode (Mo), standard deviation (DP), variance (Var), minimum (Min) and maximum (Max).

Table 2 - General statistical description data for each question

Question topic	N	M	Me	Mo	DP	Var	Mín	Máx
Disclosure	37	8,9	10,0	10,0	1,3	1,7	5,0	10,0
Material — Canva	37	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,3	8,0	10,0
YouTube videos	37	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,6	0,3	8,0	10,0
Themes	37	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,3	8,0	10,0
Time (synchronous)	37	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,3	8,0	10,0
Teaching strategies	37	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,7	0,4	8,0	10,0
Teacher-student interaction	37	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,4	0,2	8,0	10,0
Student-student interaction	37	9,3	10,0	10,0	1,0	1,0	7,0	10,0

Source: Own authorship (2020).

According to Table 2, the questionnaire had 37 respondents. The two lowest averages are concentrated on topics related to dissemination and student-student interaction. As can be seen, the greatest variations in standard deviation and variance measures are also concentrated in these items, indicating to researchers that, for future course offerings in this modality, new dissemination strategies and the possibility of promoting better student interaction should be addressed. -student. The greatest variation in these results is related to the minimum values assigned (five for disclosure and seven for student-student interaction).

The data demonstrate that the teacher-student interaction item was the best rated in comparison to the others (with lower standard deviation and lower variance), although the items referring to the classroom materials produced in Canva, the themes addressed and the videos produced for YouTube have also gotten high scores. The time allocated for the duration of synchronous classes was also well evaluated, as only 2.7% of the participants gave a grade of 8 and the others indicated higher scores. In relation to this aspect, it is noteworthy that, when starting the synchronous meetings, there was no clarity on the part of the teacher regarding the ideal time for their duration, and, over the weeks, the time varied from class to class. There were situations in which, in one of the classes, all the content provided for in the material was worked on for around one hour; however, in other classes, there were occasions when a class reached

two hours in length, even without addressing all possible aspects of the material created for that class. These differences are attributed to the level of engagement of students with the content of the themes, that is, in addition to the linguistic aspect at stake, the main focus in these situations was to genuinely contribute to the central discussion in question.

After the first classes taught, the ideal average time was adjusted so as not to make the class tiring, which allows considering, based on this experience, that the duration of an hour and a half is a reasonable time for a conversation group with the presence of, on average, ten students. This is also considered the maximum number for classes of this nature, which are intended to be highly interactive (and in which oral verbal participation of all students is guaranteed and encouraged, as it is precisely a conversation course).

Therefore, the data were separated into two groups referring to class attendance, that is, from the answers "I was present in all or most of the classes" (ie, from eight to ten classes) and "I was present in some classes " (between five and seven classes). As there was only one student who answered "I was only present at the beginning of classes" (less than four classes), this data was discarded for the next analysis. The objective was to verify whether this variable (class attendance) caused a change in perceptions. Table 3 represents descriptive statistics and central tendency data for the group of students who attended all or most classes.

Table 3 - Data from the group that attended all or most classes

Question topic	N	M	Me	Mo	DP	Var	Mín	Máx
Disclosure	26	8,9	10,0	10,0	1,4	2,1	5,0	10,0
Material — Canva	26	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,6	0,3	8,0	10,0
YouTube videos	26	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,6	0,3	8,0	10,0
Themes	26	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,6	0,3	8,0	10,0
Time (synchronous)	26	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,3	8,0	10,0
Teaching strategies	26	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,6	0,3	8,0	10,0
Teacher-student interaction	26	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,2	8,0	10,0
Student-student interaction	26	9,4	10,0	10,0	1,0	1,0	7,0	10,0

Source: Own authorship (2020).

There were 26 respondents to the group who attended all or most classes (between eight and ten classes). According to Table 3, the course was well rated (measures of fashion and median respectively equal). However, the disclosure showed more significant variance and standard deviation, as well as the student-student interaction. As for the worst-assessed aspect, the item "disclosure" of the course, it is understood that the minimum time for enrollment (closed even before the scheduled end, due to high demand) has favored this low assessment. It is also highlighted as a sensitive aspect to be considered the fact that most participants belonged to the academic community of the institution and there was a minority of external audiences, contrasting, in this aspect, with the reality of other extension courses offered by the project previously of face-to-face form (which manage to reach a larger audience of the non-academic community, including the population with lower purchasing power, as they are free courses). On the other hand, the possibility of integrating students who were in different municipalities, outside the project's host city and even outside the state, is due to the remote offer. Table 4 represents the data analysis for the respondents from the group who attended some classes.

Table 4 - Data from the group that was present in some classes (between five and seven classes)

Question topic	N	M	Me	Mo	DP	Var	Mín	Máx
Disclosure	10	9,0	9,0	10,0	0,9	0,9	8,0	10,0
Material — Canva	10	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,4	0,2	9,0	10,0
YouTube videos	10	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,7	0,5	8,0	10,0
Themes	10	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,4	0,2	9,0	10,0
Time (synchronous)	10	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,2	9,0	10,0
Teaching strategies	10	9,6	10,0	10,0	0,8	0,7	8,0	10,0
Teacher-student interaction	10	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,4	0,2	9,0	10,0
Student-student interaction	10	9,0	9,5	10,0	1,2	1,3	7,0	10,0

Source: Own authorship (2020).

There were ten respondents for this second group. On average, the course was well rated even by students who participated in just a few

classes (ie, between five and seven classes). When comparing the results in Tables 2, 3 and 4, the lowest means are for the items of dissemination and student-student interaction, with standard deviations showing greater differences. The minimum value is in Table 3; however, comparing the standard deviation results, there are two more items that stand out in Table 4, related to didactic strategies and YouTube videos. It is noticed that the evaluation of student-student interaction was higher among students who attended more classes, which can be explained because, at the end of the course, the design of activities that allowed students to ask questions among themselves was expanded, and there was a reduction in the number of questions directed by the teacher, as established in a dominant way in the materials developed for the first weeks.

The questionnaire included a supplementary question, which asked students to justify the reasons for their absences. Of the 30% of students who indicated that they had low/medium attendance, 35.7% explained that the reason for their absences was professional issues; 42.9% for personal and professional reasons; and 21.4%, for personal reasons only. Nobody indicated as an answer to the absences the loss of interest in the course, the inadaptation to the technology or the adopted methodology (possible alternatives to be listed in the anonymous questionnaire). These data coincide with the observations made by the professor that, after the end of the lockdown, the course had a certain dropout of students, and others, who had not been absent until then, began to show greater irregularity in their attendance at synchronous meetings.

It was also sought to assess whether there was a difference in the assessment between students who faced technological difficulties (for example: failure of the camera or audio, internet connection problems, etc.) and those who had not experienced any difficulty in this aspect . Table 5 represents the data analysis for respondents who had no difficulties with the use of technology.

Table 5 - Data from the group that had no difficulties with the technology

Question topic	N	M	Me	Mo	DP	Var	Mín	Máx
Disclosure	18	9,1	10,0	10,0	1,5	2,2	5,0	10,0
Material — Canva	18	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,6	0,3	8,0	10,0
YouTube videos	18	9,6	10,0	10,0	0,8	0,6	8,0	10,0
Themes	18	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,3	8,0	10,0
Time (synchronous)	18	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,2	9,0	10,0
Teaching strategies	18	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,3	8,0	10,0
Teacher-student interaction	18	9,9	10,0	10,0	0,2	0,1	9,0	10,0
Student-student interaction	18	9,1	10,0	10,0	1,2	1,5	7,0	10,0

Source: Own authorship (2020).

There were 18 respondents who had no difficulties with the technology. The results in Table 5 reinforce greater variations in the standard deviation for disclosure, with a minimum rating of 5 and student-student interaction with a minimum rating of 7. The means were all above 9. Table 6 represents the analysis of the respondents' data who had some difficulty with the technology.

Table 6 - Data from the group that had difficulties with the technology

Question topic	N	M	Me	Mo	DP	Var	Mín	Máx
Disclosure	19	8,8	8,0	10,0	1,1	1,3	7,0	10,0
Material — Canva	19	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,3	8,0	10,0
YouTube videos	19	9,9	10,0	10,0	0,3	0,1	9,0	10,0
Themes	19	9,8	10,0	10,0	0,5	0,3	8,0	10,0
Time (synchronous)	19	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,6	0,3	8,0	10,0
Teaching strategies	19	9,6	10,0	10,0	0,8	0,6	8,0	10,0
Teacher-student interaction	19	9,7	10,0	10,0	0,6	0,3	8,0	10,0
Student-student interaction	19	9,5	10,0	10,0	0,8	0,6	8,0	10,0

Source: Own authorship (2020).

Nineteen respondents had some difficulty using the technology. The average did not change significantly, compared with the analyzes of the group that did not present difficulties. To test the normality of the data, the Shapiro-Wilk statistical test was used, which stands out for its efficiency and flexibility when dealing with different sample sizes (SHAPIRO; WILK, 1965) — Torman, Coster and Riboldi (2012) performed tests of normalities and verified the robustness of the referred test. To verify the existence or not of data normality, 95% significance was considered. By p-value < 0.05, it is attested that the data do not have normal distribution (FIELD, 2009).

In view of this, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used (FIELD, 2009). The test sought to investigate the hypotheses that: H0: **there is no statistical difference between the item evaluations between the most frequent students (between eight and ten classes) and the least frequent (between five and seven classes); or H1: there is a statistical difference between the assessments of the items between the most frequent students (between eight and ten classes) and the least frequent (between five and seven classes)**. This comparison is in relation to the two groups studied in Tables 3 and 4, considering 95% significance in the test. The results of the comparisons were insignificant according to the p-value, that is, (p-value > 0.05). Thus, the hypothesis that there is no difference between the assessments is accepted.

The test was also performed for the two groups of students who had difficulties with technology (total of 18 respondents) and those who had no problems (total of 19 respondents). The hypotheses analyzed were: H0: **there is no statistical difference in the evaluation of the items for students who had no difficulties with the technology and those who had some difficulty(s); H1: there is a statistical difference in the evaluation of the items between the group of students who did not have difficulties with the technology and those who had some difficulty(s).** The statistical test showed the p-value > 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no statistical effect in the evaluation is accepted, corroborating with hypothesis H0. It is important to highlight that 95% of significance was used in the test (the results compared are from the groups in Tables 5 and 6).

As for the supplementary question about the use of WhatsApp, 80.6% of the students indicated that this was the best tool for sending materials/activities and to facilitate communication; 11.6% said they were indifferent to which tool to use, that is, they would be adapted to any one; 5.6% would like the communication to take place through WhatsApp, but sending materials through the Moodle platform; and 2.8% that the communication took place via WhatsApp, but the material was sent by email (that is, out of the total, this response corresponds to only one participant).

The data reveal that the acceptance rate for the use of WhatsApp is very high both for communication and for sending materials, and that the number of people who preferred the combination of the WhatsApp group with other tools is negligible, which indicates that it can be used in other similar experiments. A factor that corroborates this data is that, even after classes were over, students continued to participate in the groups.

In the question regarding the hypothesis of attending a course of this nature in another opportunity, regardless of the Covid-19 quarantine, 94.6% of the participants said yes; 2.7%, that maybe; and 2.7% who do not. In other words, the acceptance of this format of extension courses was high.

Regarding the two open questions in which students were asked to answer which themes they liked the most and which they didn't, most indicated that they liked, in general, all themes, because of their topicality, reference to everyday situations and because they allowed reflection, whether on a personal level (and psychological, as some have mentioned, such as the debate on the overuse of social networks), or on social issues (such as unemployment in the Covid-19 times or exploitation in the world of work) . As for the least preferred themes, most respondents indicated that there were no or did not remember any that they did not like, with the exception of one student who pointed to a class in which the creation of woodland cemeteries in some cultures was mentioned and another he pointed out a class in which comic strips were worked on.

In the last open question, in which suggestions and general comments were indicated, the following observations were pointed out (each one by a student): a) I would like to use Moodle; b) would like to review vocabulary every five lessons; c) I would like you to limit the number to a maximum of six students per class; d) would like the recording of the class to be made available to students; e) I would like the maximum time of the synchronous class to be 40 minutes; f) I would like there to be two classes per week; g) would like the use of lyrics in class materials; h) I would like the students to be able to answer different questions from each other. At least two students suggested that a few minutes of class be devoted to interaction about free themes, and three students suggested that there be post-class assignments or quick exercises. It is worth mentioning that, at the beginning of the course, it was even suggested that beginners' groups record small audios, to be posted in the WhatsApp group, with content learned in the previous class or that they thought would be difficult. In only three classes this type of task was performed and, even so, by a small number of students, it was abandoned over the weeks due to the lack of adherence of the majority (in only one of the groups this practice occurred more frequently in the over the weeks, notably by the older students among those in the groups, and not by the younger ones).

Among the open responses, two were selected that were considered outstanding with regard to the feedback received on the extension proposal carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic (our highlights):

> Excerpt 1: I really liked the format of the classes. They were dynamic, content-rich and fun. **At first it was a little awkward having online video calling classes with lots of unknown people**, but as time went by, we got to know each other and interact more. It was the first time I studied Spanish and I loved the methodology and the topics covered. I could see a very good evolution in my vocabulary, which motivated me to study for classes with the videos provided by (teacher's name) and also by apps. It was ten weeks of a lot of learning and good interaction between colleagues. Studying Spanish gave me moments of pleasure and relaxation in this **crazy**

> **routine of PANDEMIA**. However, he might not be able to juggle classes in times outside the pandemic. Thank you from the heart for your efforts, (teacher's name), I really loved it! Besos.

> Excerpt 2: For me, the methodological proposal was excellent (theme, class duration, platform used and the material developed by the teacher and made available to students (Canva and videos). I think that this **proposal for weekly online courses** is a great opportunity to **generate knowledge**, involve different audiences, **allowing the sharing of experiences and reducing the social distance** imposed on all of us in this delicate moment we are experiencing.

In the answers given, which were also verbalized in a similar way on the last day of class by some students, the typical elements of a complex system are identified, with special emphasis on the adaptive character, as in March, when they started classes and video calls were not yet part of the daily routine of the vast majority and, even less, with unknown people in the pre-pandemic coexistence. However, as reported, the groups were formed and stabilized week by week, conforming the idea of building communities in virtual learning environments (HEEMANN, 2012), which could mobilize moments of relaxation and pleasant sharing, as well as concerns about the pandemic scenario — both for students and for the teacher — without, however, blurring the main objective of generating new knowledge and learning, as shown in the selected excerpts. Therefore, the occupational meaning mentioned at the beginning of the text to justify the offer of the course is reiterated, as this was a less evident element before the pandemic in the scope of the roles attributed to language teaching.

Final considerations

The Covid-19 pandemic was installed in everyone's life and it was up to each one to manage it with the strategies they could. The term "strategy" is used here from the perspective of Morin (2003, p. 130),

as opposed to a "program". As he states, in a program, "if the outer circumstances are not favorable, the program stops or fails." The strategy, on the other hand, "is determined taking into account an unforeseen situation, adverse elements, even adversaries", modifying itself with "immense malleability" (MORIN, 2003, p. 131).

At the institution that was the focus of the analysis, the planned curriculum "program" was temporarily abandoned (the postgraduate academic calendar started only in June and the undergraduate calendar only in September 2020). The extension route was found as a strategy (without the bureaucratic elements present in regular programs) for teaching practice in a period of indefiniteness of immediate institutional paths in the face of the pandemic scenario. In this context, new reflections and experiences could be carried out regarding the rigidity of some norms for teaching activities present in the face-to-face model, in which teachers must be much more attentive to student attendance; perform numerical measurements for assigning grades; having a fixed time to finish a class etc., because this is the dominant and accepted modus operandi, despite the numerous weaknesses and criticisms.

With regard to the didactic materials produced and the platforms used, the data reveal that the choices made (use of WhatsApp, daily production of videos on YouTube, use of the Canva platform for the production of synchronous classroom materials) proved to be efficient in generating the engagement of students and satisfaction with the proposal. It is noteworthy that the production of authorial materials, created in order to place classes in the context of the pandemic and providing students with critical-reflective interactions, proved to be efficient in generating an effective meaning to the discussions, which would not be possible if they were generic materials available on the market for language teaching are used. The triad production of contextualized materials, a trusting environment for interaction and asynchronous teaching presence (through daily videos of short duration, for example) added to the non-linearity of the contents (allowing new people to enter the initial groups without harming the learning process) seems to be a good indication of the success of a proposed language extension course (and possibly courses of other natures, in future experiences).

It is expected that the post-pandemic will allow the understanding, in the educational collective, that institutions usually based on "programs" (in Morin's terms) must radically review their way of thinking about the relationship with knowledge, because the models that were positions that many hope to recover are no longer sustainable, due to several factors, but mainly because people are in a process of profound cultural change, showing, by numerous indicators, even before the pandemic, that the previous model was less and less effective. The return to "normality" should seek, in successful experiences during remote learning, some alternative ways for a more flexible organizational functioning, not only for extension courses, as was the case presented, but also for undergraduate courses and postgraduate courses, traditionally more rigid in structural terms, especially those based exclusively on the logic of physical presence.

Finally, given the lack of freedom to come and go at the height of the lockdown, the freedom to propose and be part of an open course in various aspects, from the schedules of classes, the topics covered, the tools used, the time the duration of each class and the duration of the course itself, was a unique experience, as it deals with a set of entirely new factors for the teaching practice that is the focus of the analysis. Teaching and learning in environments of greater freedom unequivocally bring better and faster results in several aspects, which cannot be fully measured by means of some external variables or indicators, but mainly to be experienced and stored in memory.

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