UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

ÁREA SOCIOHUMANÍSTICA

TÍTULO MAGÍSTER EN PEDAGOGÍA DE LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

The use of Powtoon and VideoScribe in a flipped classroom to improve listening and speaking skills on distance undergraduate students

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO LOJA

2017

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Septiembre, 2017

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Magister.

Gina Karina Camacho Minuche

DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de titulación: The use of Powtoon and VideoScribe in a flipped classroom to improve listening and speaking skills on distance undergraduate students, realizado por Morocho Pintado Cristina Kathalina ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución; por lo tanto, se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, julio de 2017

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Mgtr. Gina Camacho Minuche

DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

"Yo Morocho Pintado, Cristina Kathalina declaro ser autora del presente trabajo de titulación: The use of Powtoon and VideoScribe in a flipped classroom to improve listening and speaking skills on distance undergraduate students, de la Titulación de Maestría en Pedagogía de la Enseñanza de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, siendo la Mgtr. Gina Karina Camacho Minuche directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además, certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados verídicos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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Morocho Pintado Cristina Kathalina

C.I.: 1104869795

DEDICATION

To all my beloved family, your unconditional support and love were fundamental during this process.

For you, José Julián; you are my inspiration in every single step.

Cristina Kathalina

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I owe my most sincere thankfulness to Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, to all its authorities and educational staff in general, whose encouragement, guidance and support enabled me to develop understanding of the subject and to increase our spiritual and moral knowledge.

My warm thanks go to Mgtr. Gina Karina, for her patience, motivation, enthusiasm and immense knowledge. Her guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this research study.

Last but not least, big thanks to my classmates and colleagues who supported and worked with me to achieve this goal. They all made the difficult moments easier and the easier ones more enjoyable.

Cristina Kathalina

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ABSTRACT

This research study is an attempt to examine the effectiveness of using Powtoon and VideoScribe to prepare the pre-class material needed to apply the flipped classroom strategy in order to improve the listening and speaking skills on distance undergraduate students in a local university. For this purpose, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the information gathered from the research field; the participants were 19 students in total from the Listening and Speaking IV class, they were randomly assigned to either the control or experimental group. In conclusion, the learning experience of using “VideoScribe” and “Powtoon” in a flipped class to improve listening and speaking skills was satisfactory for students. They showed a great acceptance towards the way in which the flipped classroom strategy was developed since they decided when and how to learn according to their schedules. The material presented, as well as the format and structure of the contents were highly acknowledged by the learners. Additionally, the flipped classroom strategy promoted higher grades and motivation on the members of the experimental group.

Keywords: flipped classroom, Powtoon, VideoScribe, listening, speaking, technology

RESUMEN

Este proyecto de investigación pretende examinar la eficacia de usar Powtoon y VideoScribe para preparar el material pre-clase necesario para aplicar la estrategia del aula invertida para mejorar las habilidades de escucha y habla en estudiantes a distancia en una universidad local. Para ello se utilizaron métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos para analizar la información obtenida en la investigación de campo; los participantes fueron 19 estudiantes en total de la clase de Listening and Speaking IV, que fueron asignados randómicamente al grupo control o experimental. En conclusión, la experiencia de aprendizaje de usar "VideoScribe" y "Powtoon" en una clase invertida para mejorar las habilidades de escucha y habla fue satisfactoria para los estudiantes. Ellos demostraron una gran aceptación hacia la forma en que se desarrolló la estrategia del aula invertida, ya que ellos deciden cuándo y cómo aprender de acuerdo con sus horarios. El material presentado, así como el formato y la estructura de los contenidos fueron positivamente aceptados por los alumnos. Además, la estrategia del aula invertida promovió mayores notas y motivación en los miembros del grupo experimental.

Palabras clave: aula invertida, Inglés, tecnología, VideoScribe, Powtoon

INTRODUCTION

Different strategies and technological tools are emerging in the educational field that are used to innovate the teaching-learning process and help students to improve their knowledge. Teachers around the world have re-evaluated their teaching styles and integrated technology in their lessons in order to take advantage of its benefits. Since prospects presented by educational technologies are limitless and borderless, teachers are in search for ways to incorporate technology into their classrooms to foster better learning opportunities for students.

By combining the use of these innovative technological tools and the flipped classroom strategy in language learning, a student-centered environment might be created in which students are more likely to be involved and participate actively in order to acquire all the English language skills (Thomas, 2009). According, to Basal (2015), the flipped classroom is not just about recording didactic content and sending it to students before a lesson, the most important is that the time spent in class can be used for engaging in discussing concepts, clarifying hard-to-understand information, and investigating questions related to content. Thereby, this research study is an attempt to examine the effectiveness of using Powtoon and VideoScribe to prepare the pre-class material needed to apply the flipped classroom strategy in order to improve the listening and speaking skills on distance undergraduate students in a local university; evidence of improvement will be found in the academic performance and satisfaction showed by all the participants of the current study.

Since listening and speaking skills tend to be more difficult for students to acquire and even more for distance students who do not have face-to-face classes to practice, the use of flipped education and digital technologies seem to be one of the best options to change the traditional instruction into a more interactive one in which students find many opportunities to use the English language. In this regard, Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) support that flipped classroom helps EFL learners to improve English listening skills since students become more independent, highly responsible for their own learning, and the rapport between teacher and students increases.

Hung (2015) concluded that the structured and semi-structured flip lessons were more effective instructional designs than the non-flip lessons. Moreover, both the structured and semi-structured flip lessons helped the students to achieve better learning outcomes, develop better attitudes toward their learning experiences, and devote more effort in the learning process. In conclusion, the flipped classroom constituted an effective approach to foster active learning.

Similarly, Engin (2014) determined that student-created videos promoted second language learning through research, simplification, explanation, and encouraged more focus on form; however, it was also observed that students prefer a teacher explanation than a peer explanation since students trusted more on the expertise of teachers. Finally, Tyagi (2012) investigated that Web 2.0 strengthened important aspects of learning that may be difficult to stimulate in learners since they are digital natives and are really engaged in using technology.

As it was previously mentioned, the flipped classroom and Web 2.0 tools have been successfully used to improve different language skills on students. In this context, the current investigation pretends to compare the academic results and motivation resulting from using this new strategy and the specific Web 2.0 tools (Powtoon and VideoScribe) to increase listening and speaking skills in one of the two groups of students enrolled in the undergraduate English program.

Virtual classrooms and web conferencing have been successfully integrated into distance higher education; however, the traditional methodology used on virtual classes for English students consumes too much time; all the information is presented during the class which means that half of it is used for this purpose, leaving just a little time for practicing. This is the weakest point of this system; distance students of the listening and speaking class only have a short time for being in virtual contact with their tutor so they need to use that time to the maximum for improving their skills. Consequently, in order for the teacher to work in all planned activities at the assigned time, the solution identified is to flip the class and provide the students with meaningful material and activities to work on before the class. It means that class time will be spent in authentic, lively discussions which is the main benefit that the participants will have; due to

Spanish speakers struggle more with listening and speaking than the acquisition of other skills, such as reading or writing, since the former are quite difficult to practice when the student does not live in an English speaking country. For this reason, providing as much time as possible for practicing is crucial to gain a mastery of the language.

Based on the facts presented, the current investigation is quite important for managing the teaching-learning process and it will provide a basis for further investigations on the field. It has been shown that the previous studies were done considering on-site students, but none has been focused on distance systems as this is. By the end of the research, information related to the effectiveness of flipped classroom will be presented, as well as the benefits that students will receive regarding the listening and speaking skills.

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last years, researchers have focused on developing new methods, strategies, activities and tools which enhance the teaching-learning process for distance learners who have experienced the highest risk of dropping out of their careers at college due to the isolation these students feel at not attending on-site classes. Specifically, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) seems to turn easier when e-learning takes place in a distance system; moreover, adopting new strategies to develop specific skills such as listening and speaking is quite important to ensure a great mastery of the target language. In this section, the most relevant topics related to this research will be examined in order to have the proper theoretical background.

Listening and Speaking in Language Learning

O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989), cited in Pourhossein and Reza (2011), mention that listening can be defined as a conscious and dynamic process in which the listener sets up meaning by using signals from existing knowledge and background information and by considering a specific setting, under a specific set of circumstances. On the other hand, speaking is considered as a productive skill in which individuals are able to express themselves verbally, logically, effortlessly and correctly under a specific context to meet both transactional and interactional purposes by using correct grammar structures, pronunciation and lexis, and adopting the most appropriate pragmatic and discourse rules of the spoken language (Torky, 2006).

Thereby listening and speaking play an important role in communication as it is said that, of the total time spent on communication, listening takes up 40-50 percent; speaking, 25-30 percent; reading, 11-16 percent; and writing, about 9 percent (Mendelsohn, 1994, cited in Pourhossein and Reza, 2011). Hence, acquiring a high level of mastery of listening and speaking skills in English represents a great challenge for many second language learners, and for English teachers as well, since they need to be well prepared in contemporary approaches to the teaching of the aural and oral skills. (Richards, 2003).

Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2007) state that listening and speaking have been considered the most difficult to learn out of the four skills because many complex factors (e.g. accent, pronunciation, environment, personal bias) do not allow the student to achieve a full understanding of the target language. They also mention that these two skills are close related due to listeners must interact with the speakers responding to what they hear in order to achieve a successful communication.

Renukadevi (2014) claims that learners have experienced many difficulties when using the target language orally, this results from lack of exposure to English language environments that allow them to use English to communicate and express ideas. Besides, learners are not in contact with the cultures of native English speakers (Oradee, 2012). For many researchers, this problem turns worse due to speaking skills are not part of the curriculum since it is not examined in national tests, teachers are not proficient enough, class conditions that do not foster oral activities and very few opportunities outside class for practicing using the target language (Gudu, 2015).

As Egan (1999) exposes, having learners to produce spoken language cannot be focused only on recording one's voice and comparing it to native models. Speech must be a fundamental part of the instructional design, and production possibilities should be more. According to Flohr and Paesler (2010), listening and speaking constitute the necessary skills to develop the communicative competence in English; therefore, students will be able to comprehend, infer, interpret and answer properly to any spoken discourse since they are confident enough to speak in different contexts, to be creative and critic when speaking, and, of course, exchange ideas or information appropriately in any situation.

Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) and Web 2.0 tools

The rapid development of the Internet technology enables learners to communicate and participate in multilingual communities around the world by using any technological device such a laptop, smartphone, tablet, among others. ESL/EFL teachers and learners have benefited from

the virtually boundless uses of this new tendency which promotes both online learning and face-to-face learning. In this context, Bush in 1997 used the expression “technology enhanced language learning” (TELL) to describe a more inclusive sense of technology and its impact on teaching and learning language. It means that it is not just about what the computer is able to do but also the interaction of the learner with the technology for academic purposes.

Golshan and Tafazoli (2014) describe TELL as the study of applications of technology in language teaching and learning which main goal is to discover ways for using technological tools for the purpose of teaching and learning the target language; it is to say that TELL is the use of technologies that improve and facilitate educational learning.

In this regard, “Web 2.0” is a term used to label an apparent second generation or, as O’Reilly (2007) indicates, an improved form of the World Wide Web that promotes interchanges of knowledge and collaboration among users. In this regard, An, Aworuwa, Ballard, and Williams (2009) agree and state that for educational purposes, Web 2.0 tools encourage and enable teachers and students to share ideas and collaborate in new and more dynamic ways. These technologies also push educators to rethink the way of teaching in order to include active and meaningful material and activities to transform the traditional practices in the classroom (Grosseck, 2009).

Particularly, distance students have received great benefits from the adoption of Web 2.0 for their education since they are able to get connected, cooperate and share with their peers and instructors synchronously. Mchichi and Afdel (2012) indicate that combining these tools with the most suitable learning designs and pedagogical strategies enhances and enriches the distance education. The use of Web 2.0 is based on a social-constructivist approach which helps focus materials and support for learners to allow them to actively participate rather than passively receive information provided to them as it occurs in the traditional system (Sturm, Kennell, McBride, & Kelly, 2009).

The 2010 Horizon Report, cited in Conole and Alevizou (2010), refers to four trends that mark the adoption of technology in higher education:

1. The great amount of online resources and relationships which reestablishes the educators' role.
2. The importance of having a universal, just-in-time, individualized and informal learning that suits better this student generation.
3. The augmented use of cloud computing challenges have become better distributed.
4. The notion that collaboration is pretty important, not only for students but for institutions as well.

Anderson (2007) and, Kulakli and Mahony (2014) Web 2.0 agree that as students use Web 2.0 tools in everyday situations, they are more likely to use these technologies for academic purposes due to they already have the technical skills to manage many different tools. In addition, an effective use of Web 2.0 turns important for students in this contemporary world, since they need a set of skills that weaken boundaries between formal and informal learning (Simões & Borges, 2008).

PowToon is one of these emerging Web 2.0 tools. It is a Web-based animation software which permits users to create animated presentations by working with pre-created objects, imported images, music and recordings of your own voice. PowToon is very easy to use; thus, any technical skills are not required to work on it. It can be played in the PowToon online viewer, exported to YouTube or downloaded as an MP4 file for later use.

VideoScribe is another tool that has been used to create the material for the flipped classroom. This software is for creating whiteboard animations automatically. All the information can be arranged according to the user's needs; effects, images, audio and text may be included in each presentation. These video files can be exported to Quicktime video, YouTube or Flash video.

Grosseck (2009) enlists some of the main advantages of using Web 2.0 in higher education as follows:

- reduction of costs and flexibility to choose the most appropriate tool for each purpose;
- information can be gotten easier and faster;
- use of a variety of Web 2.0 technologies in class;
- ease of use and reliability in constant usage over a period of time;

She also indicates that these social technologies work due to teachers can promote collaborative learning not only among students, but with colleagues and community members from all over the world. However, it is important not to overwhelm the use of Web 2.0 since those tools can block information processing, and can decrease the quality of learning.

In particular, Godwin-Jones (2005), cited in Sevenson and Liu (2010), refers to some specific examples of teachers who used the Web 2.0 to simplify language learning; instant messaging tools were applied to interact with native speakers and also downloadable podcasts were available to students to practice their listening. As the author mentions, many of those tools are new in foreign language instruction but their usefulness cannot be hidden within the classroom. In this context, further research is necessary to investigate the implications of using these tools for language learning purposes.

The Flipped Classroom Strategy

In a general context, the flipped model breaks the monotonous model in which the teacher is the center of the class; it involves changing the typical university style of lecture-based teaching for a student-centered one (Murray, Koziniec, & McGill, 2015). This is a pedagogical model in which the students are exposed to content before the class-time which will let them work later in some guided practical activities during the class-time (Muldrow, 2013). According to Bergmann and Sams (2012), it is the in-class time that every teacher must evaluate and

redesign since direct instruction was moved outside of the classroom, students were able to conduct higher quality and more engaging activities.

The Flipped Learning Network (2014) presented four pillars attached to this instructional model:

1. Flexible Environment. Educators and learners are flexible since they are able to work at their own pace.
2. Learning Culture. A student-centered conception is the basis; students are responsible for their own learning.
3. Intentional Content. Teachers redesign their planning in order to include meaningful material and information to help students understand better.
4. Professional Educator. This model is quite challenging and demanding for teachers since they should monitor constantly the class and give feedback to student during the whole class while students are working.

As it has been noted, instructors have a different role, they are no longer "teachers" which means they are not involved in a merely transmission of information "from their mouths to the student's ears." In this regard, Schoolwires (2012) mentions that teachers concentrate on what is the most important: what the students learn and how they apply it. They are now "facilitators of learning," which strengthen the idea of student-centered learning (Francl, 2014). Since students are provided with videos before the lesson, they are able to work in groups, discuss, analyze, investigate, and/or work on problem-solving cases which help them to develop their critical thinking and engage them into the learning process through relevant experiences (Bormann, 2014). Bergmann and Sams present some important characteristics an effective teacher may have in order to succeed in a flipped class:

1. The teacher should be proficient enough to explain and expand the information he/she is teaching.

2. The teacher should be free of prejudices and accept that he/she may not know something, but he/she is capable of looking for the answer.
3. The teacher should meet individual needs, considering particular cases in which extra help may be given.
4. The teacher should have the control over the class in order to have all students working on the corresponding tasks.

If the teacher meets those characteristics, then it is necessary to consider some important aspects before he/she starts. First, setting up clear learning objectives helps teacher to focus on what they want to achieve with their students. Next, it is advisable to distinguish between the content that is learned better through inquiry from the one learned through direct instruction. Then, students must be able to watch the videos before the lesson in order to be well-prepared for the class. Also, meaningful activities should be planned to be done in class. Finally, multiple versions of tests may be used for assessment in order to measure the students' achievement.

Bearing this in mind, Bergmann and Sams (2012) suggest some important features to consider when preparing the videos. Videos should be short, no more than 15 minutes and only one topic must be discussed or explained; creating interesting and dynamic videos will be enhanced by changing the inflection of the voice; whenever is possible, work with a colleague to appear on the videos; do not make it too formal, add humor; do not talk about irrelevant information and use annotations in order to help students to be on track.

Roehl, Linga, and Jett (2013) warn there are some challenges with the flipped classroom model that should be considered. It demands changing traditional lectures to media content in order to post it online. Teachers may need to adjust the content later so it is important to use flexible technologies in order to be able to re-record or just add some specific information to the existing material. The flipped classroom model involves students to be responsible for their own learning, hence, it is compulsory for teachers to set up clear objectives of the course, that way all the people involved have clear what they are supposed to do. Therefore, the flipped classroom

model should be analyzed carefully to ensure that it is the appropriate model for the content we plan to teach considering that the most important aspect is to help students achieve all the learning objectives.

All in all, the adoption of new instructional strategy entails a shift in the minds of both teachers and learners. Teachers who are willing to use this flipped model should constantly reflect on their teaching efficiency, and have clear that students need time and proper guidance to adapt to the new instructional method. As it was previously mentioned, some of the skills that students may develop are critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Indeed, not only educators and students are involved, but institutions too; it means that educational institutions are in charge of providing training, equipment and the opportunity to address these innovative practices which are oriented toward a more powerful and optimistic future for education.

Since second language teachers play an active and important role by teaching students how to try out learning strategies to diverse language activities and how to broaden these strategies to new tasks both in the language class and in content areas requiring language skills, many authors have carried out different studies all over the world in order to analyze the use of the flipped classroom strategy, as well as the use of the Web 2.0 tools in the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign/second language. The upcoming section presents the most relevant studies to the current research topic.

Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) investigated the effectiveness of the flipped classroom in enhancing pre-university students' English listening skills and their perceptions about this strategy. The sample for this study was thirty Cambodian students who were assessed considering content, form, structure and coherence, as well as grammar, general linguistic range, vocabulary range, and spelling. The authors used quantitative and qualitative methods. One test at the beginning and one at the end of the course were provided, the scores were

analyzed by using SPSS in order to measure the students' improvement, in addition, a questionnaire was applied to know the students' opinions on the flipped classroom.

On the other hand, data gathered from semi-structure interviews regarding the students' opinions toward flipped classroom to enhance their listening comprehension in English was analyzed qualitatively. At the end of the investigation, the authors concluded that the flipped classroom was an effective method for teaching English to improve listening skills in the target group due to students felt confident with this new strategy which helped them to become more independent and responsible for their own learning.

In this regard, Basal (2015) studied the implications of using the flipped classroom in foreign language teaching and the teachers' perceptions on it. The model was applied in the Advanced Reading and Writing I and II courses in a state university in Turkey. Particularly, forty-seven pre-service teachers participated in this research; however, only thirty-five answered the designed instruments. The data were collected via an open-ended questionnaire and were analyzed using a qualitative design. The findings showed that English teachers were in favor of using flipped classroom as an integral part of on-site courses.

Basal concluded that students found improvement in four specific categories: learning at one's own pace, advance student preparation, overcoming the limitations of class time, and increasing the participation in the classroom. Addionally, the author believed that the success of a flipped classroom depends on the teacher since they should know the most important theories first, and then, they should know perfectly what flipping the class means in order to select meaningful and engaging activities for students to work on during the class time.

Hung (2015) examined the impacts of flipped classroom on English language learners' academic performance, learning attitudes, and participation levels. Both quantitative and qualitative data were employed in this study to understand the English language learners' experiences. The flipped classroom approach was applied with three different formats of instructional design: structured units of flip lessons in the form of WebQuests (experimental

group I), semistructured units of flip lessons (experimental group II), and non-flip lessons conducted in a relatively traditional manner (control group).

The results demonstrated that the structured and semi-structured flip lessons were more effective instructional designs than the non-flip lessons. Moreover, both the structured and semi-structured flip lessons helped the students achieved better learning outcomes, developed better attitudes toward their learning experiences, and devoted more effort in the learning process. In conclusion, the flipped classroom constituted an effective approach to foster active learning.

Equally important, a study to explore the extent to which student-created digital videos could develop language and writing skills in a second language was developed by Engin (2014). In this research, the author included seventeen female undergraduate students who were enrolled in a composition class. Engin used a two-part questionnaire; the first part was aimed to know the students' perceptions of the digital videos in their roles of consumers and the second part aimed to elicit perceptions of the usefulness of creating their digital video to enhance their own knowledge and understanding of the concepts, as well as their language. Additionally, five students were interviewed to have a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Based on the results, the author determined that student-created videos promoted second language learning through research, simplification, explanation, and encouraged more focus on form; however, it was also observed that students prefer a teacher explanation than a peer explanation since students trusted more on the expertise of teachers. This study presented a new perspective in which not only teachers were involved in preparing the pre-class material for the flipped class but students too. In that way, learners are more likely to interact and engage in the learning process actively.

Tyagi (2012) conducted an investigation on how the faculty members of Indian universities used Web 2.0 tools and technologies in their teaching-learning process in higher education; for this purpose, the researcher administered a survey to 300 participants from six Indian universities, nevertheless, only 147 valid samples were collected and analyzed; the

participants were members of different streams and departments. Then, suitable statistical methods were chosen to analyze the results.

The findings suggested that most of the faculty members have used Web 2.0 tools for the three specific purposes: for Web based teaching and research, for interactive learning features, and to be updated on related topic of interest. Finally, Tyagi determined that Web 2.0 strengthened important aspects of learning that may be difficult to stimulate in learners since they are digital natives and are really engaged in using technology.

Similarly, Yunus, Su, and Mohd (2012) investigated the benefits that gifted students perceived when using Web 2.0 technologies in English language learning. A total of 104 young people was chosen as the population of the current investigation, but only eighty responded the questionnaires and four volunteers were interviewed. In this study, the authors used a mixed approach including a questionnaire with close- and open-ended items, and semi-structured interviews.

The results exposed a great acceptance of using this kind of tools in classroom since gifted students felt more interested in learning and improving their skills. They expressed that these new tools turned more interactive and innovative the way of teaching, the environment created because of the use of 2.0 tools was positively accepted, consequently, their language proficiency was increased, and a notion of “virtual critics” was created since gifted students were more likely to be more and more perfectionist about their own language use in order not to be criticize by others because of making mistakes. Finally, the authors advised teachers to adapt their planning in order to include Web 2.0 technologies for more meaningful English learning.

All in all, the information included in this section has provided the background needed to carry out this investigation since, as it has been shown, the previous studies were done considering on-site students, but none has been focused on distance systems as this is. Moreover, for students of Listening and Speaking subject, it constitutes a great option in order to use time-class efficiently in meaningful activities that promote their language use.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

Setting and participants

The current research study involved two groups of students. There were 19 students in total from the Listening and Speaking IV class of the English major at a local university in Loja, Ecuador. The experimental group had 10 students and the control one only 9 students; they all were placed randomly rather in the control or in the experimental group. Since they all were enrolled in the fourth level, it was assumed that all of them had an advanced level of English mastery.

The students who participated in this study were 63% females and 37% males, they all attended virtual classes due to they were enrolled at the distance system during the academic period October 2016 – February 2017, and they met weekly for 90-minutes class period.

Procedure

In order to obtain the accurate data that the general objective of this thesis requires, a thorough research process was carried out with the purpose of acquiring a scientific character; for this reason, it was needed a correct use of the methods, techniques and auxiliary sources, as determinant factors for the success of this study. Hence, the research process to obtain the required information is described in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, it was necessary to start with a careful research on many books, journals and other sources in order to find relevant information to be included in the literature review; all this information has been used to complete and support this study theoretically. In addition, some previous studies on the same issue are included in order to compare and contrast those findings with the ones resulted from this investigation.

This is an experimental study that is defined as “the approach for obtaining information about causal relationships, allowing researchers to assess the correlation (relationship) between one variable and another.” (Tierney, 2008). The main characteristic is that one element is manipulated by the researcher to see whether it has any impact upon another. The element

being manipulated is known as the independent variable, whereas the change (or outcome) resulting from the implementation of the independent variable is the dependent variable. For the present investigation, the independent variable was the flipped classroom and the dependent ones were the academic achievement and the satisfaction reflected by the participants.

Distance students from the Listening and Speaking class attended 10 virtual sessions; each session was every week for 90 minutes during the whole semester. The teacher prepared ten digital videos on a variety of topics at the beginning of the semester using Powtoon or VideoScribe, five per each mid-term. Topics were related to the units of the basic book used in this subject “NorthStar: Listening and Speaking IV”. This material was placed in the official virtual platform of the university, a week before of the tutorial session in order to give the students enough time to review it.

The micro-skills included were distinguishing between literal and implied meaning, processing speech, using appropriate registers and conventions, and/or producing chunks of language of different lengths (teachScape, 2012). During the class, students were engaged in discussions or debates considering the information provided in the pre-class material.

Besides, a questionnaire was adapted from Hung (2015) and sent to the students (see Appendix A). The first part was aimed at knowing the perceptions of the students related to the use of the material. The second part aimed to elicit perceptions of the usefulness of using the flipped classroom strategy and the extent to which it enhanced their own knowledge and understanding of the concepts, as well as their skills.

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews with five students were also used to follow up on important issues mentioned on the responses to the questionnaire; all the interviews were recorded for further analysis. Finally, academic achievement, measured through final grades, was used to compare the results between the control and the experimental group; for this purpose, some basic statistics were estimated for both groups.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

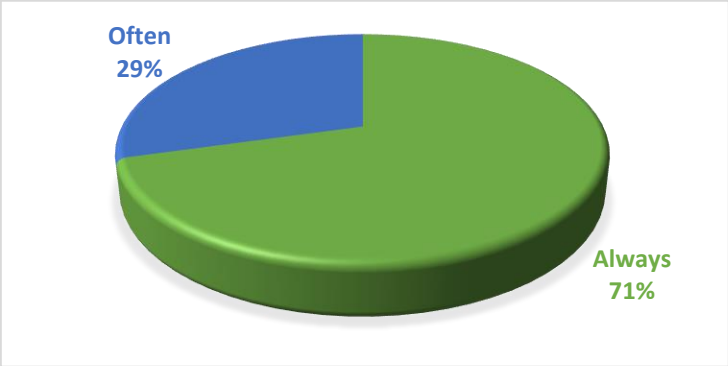
In this section, once the data was gathered in the field research, it was tabulated and analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative approaches and then presented in terms of three aspects: learning experience, learning satisfaction and the comparison of academic outcomes. The learning experience is aimed at evaluating the students' perception about how the process was developed. The second aspect shows the students' satisfaction regarding the contents, materials, structure, and improvement related to the adoption of the flipped classroom strategy. Finally, the academic performance is analyzed and compared between the experimental and control group.

Learning experience

Acquiring a high level of mastery of listening and speaking skills in English represents a great challenge for many second language learners and for English teachers as well, since they need to be well prepared in contemporary approaches to the teaching of the aural and oral skills. (Richards, 2003). In a general context, the flipped model breaks the monotonous model in which the teacher is the center of the class; it involves changing the typical university style of lecture-based teaching for a student-centered one (Murray, Koziniec, & McGill, 2015). This is a pedagogical model in which the students are exposed to content before the class-time which will let them work later in some guided practical activities during the class-time (Muldrow, 2013).

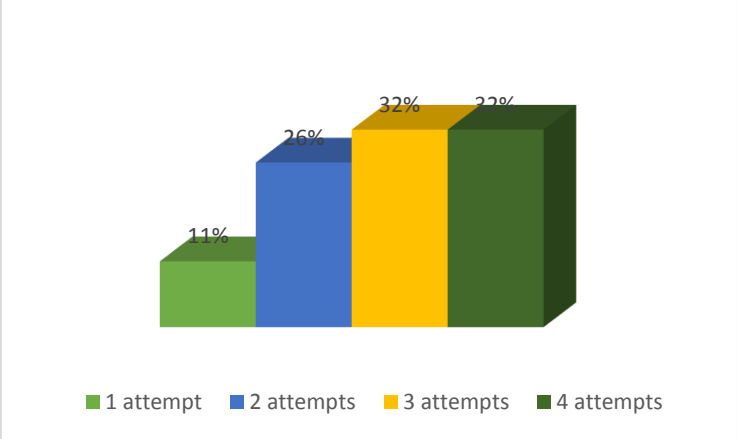
In this regard, once the methodology of the flipped classroom was explained, students were able to work by themselves on what was requested. Almost three quarters of the students always reviewed completely the material provided before the virtual session; however, 29% of them had some difficulties to review it in advance, their work activities and family issues were the causes for them not to be prepared before the lesson, turning it difficult to participate properly in each session. Bergmann and Sams (2012) mention that this can be considered as a disadvantage of the flipped model since the students who come to class without watching the

course content will cause a bigger gap among their different speed rates while working on the in-class activities due to the early finishers will get bored and the others may feel frustration.



Graph 1. Frequency of material revision
Source: Student's questionnaire
Author: Cristina Morocho

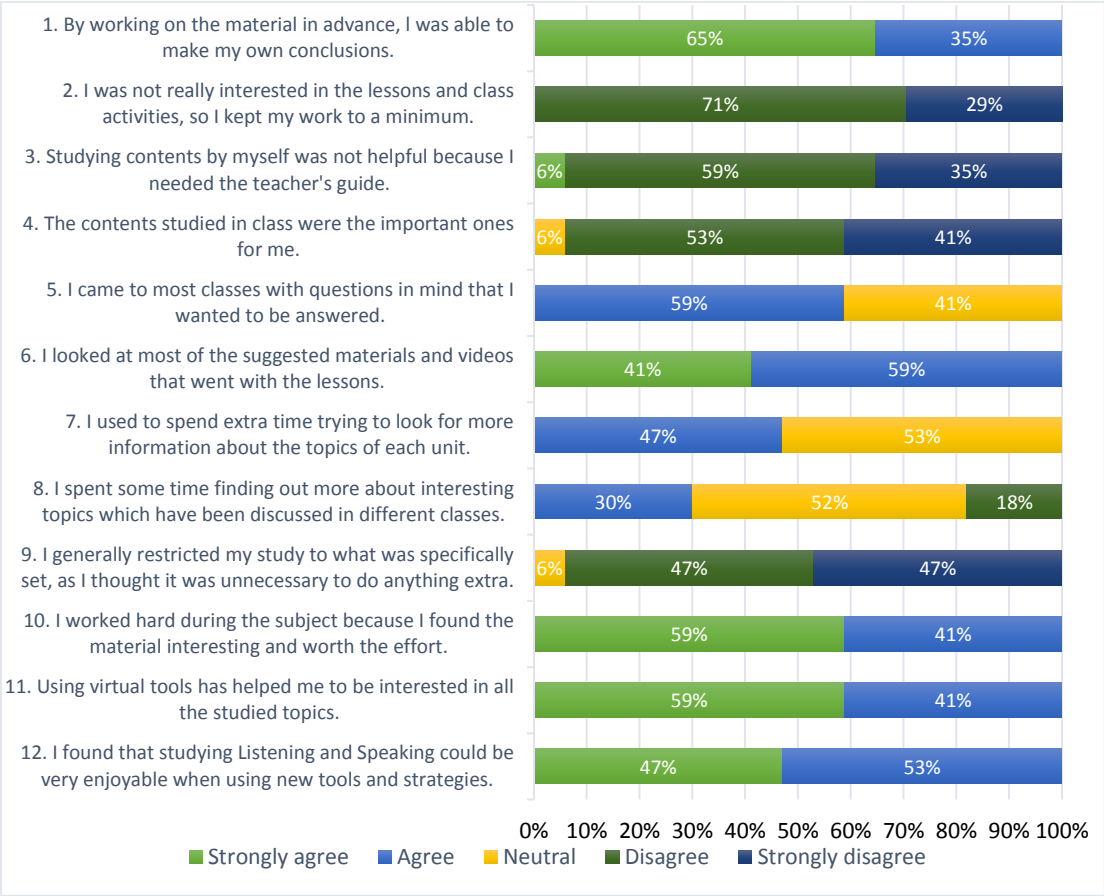
On average, the students spent an hour or less reviewing the videos and the material that went with each lesson and they made 2 to 4 attempts to watch and understand the information provided. This information is similar to the one found in the study carried out by Hung (2015) in which the students spent 68 minutes and they watched the videos 2 to 3 times on average. The material for the virtual sessions was prepared considering the recommendations made by Bergmann and Sams (2012); they suggested preparing short material, no more than 15 minutes and explaining or discussing only one topic.



Graph 2. Attempts to watch the videos
Source: Student's questionnaire
Author: Cristina Morocho

All students agreed that the material was adequate to their level and the topics were presented in an interesting way; as it corresponds to the third pillar attached to the flipped model, *Intentional Content,* meaningful material and information was included to help students understand better and improve more their skills (The Flipped Learning Network, 2014). From the interview, students mentioned that Powtoon was new for them and it seemed to be a good option instead of the traditional PowerPoint presentations that turned monotonous and not engaging at all. Similarly, VideoScribe was highly accepted because the presentations created through this means were uploaded to YouTube and it made easier for them to work on those presentations.

During the virtual sessions, as the flipped model demands to restructure the time completely, students were able to work on meaningful activities that focused on discussions, debates, among other critical thinking activities. The following table presents some of the students' perceptions to the flipped classroom:



Graph 3. Students' perceptions on the learning experience
Source: Student's questionnaire
Author: Cristina Morocho

Based on the students' questionnaire, 65% of the students strongly agreed that studying the material in advance allowed them make their own conclusions regarding the studied topic. This fact responds to one of the pillars attached to this model, *Learning Culture,* which demands students to be responsible for their own learning and in that way, it helped them to participate actively during the in-class activities and to improve their skills since they were exposed to an English environment as it was suggested by Renukadevi (2014).

According to Flohr and Paesler (2010), students need to comprehend, infer, interpret and answer properly to any spoken discourse; therefore, they require enough opportunities to speak in different contexts, to be creative and critic; this is the reason why 71% of the students disagree when they were asked if they were bored and worked at the minimum during the virtual

tutorials. In fact, they felt that the flipped classroom gave all of them huge opportunities to practice and improve both listening and speaking skills during the classes.

Almost three quarters of the participants pointed out that they did find useful studying by themselves without the teacher's guidance. These findings are supported by Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) who investigated and concluded that the flipped classroom was an effective method to improve listening skills due to students felt confident and became more independent and responsible for their own learning. Moreover, these results match the fourth pillar of the flipped class in which is stated that teachers should only monitor constantly the class and give feedback to student during the whole class while students are working (Flipped Learning Network, 2014).

Similarly, 94% of the learners thought not only the contents studied in class were the important ones, but the ones studied at home, as well. They explained that without studying the material before the lesson, they would not be able to work in any of the activities during the class; therefore, both pre-class material and in-class activities helped them to develop their critical thinking and engage them into the learning process through relevant experiences (Bormann, 2014).

The half of the students (59%) indicated that they came to classes with questions in mind that they wanted to be answered and discussed. Actually, this is exactly what the use of Web 2.0 and flipped classroom are focused on; providing materials and support for learners to actively participate rather than passively receive information provided to them as it occurred in the traditional system (Sturm, Kennell, McBride, & Kelly, 2009). In the interview, students mentioned that they knew they had to study the material before the class and they were able to study at their own pace, and as a result, they understood the contents and information better and deeper.

In addition to the pre-class presentations, 59% of the students also reviewed the extra suggested material that went with each lesson. Consequently, they showed a higher

understanding of the contents and were better prepared to participate in class discussions, debates and other activities. Additionally, students were highly exposed to English language environments that allowed them to use English to communicate and express ideas, and to be in contact with the English culture (Oradee, 2012).

Furthermore, in statements 7 and 8, students were asked if they spent time looking for their own extra information or about interesting topics that were discussed in class, but up to 52% of the participants showed a neutral position. It means that they only focused on the material provided by the teacher since they did not have more time to look for any other source or they did not feel like doing more work. In this sense, Grosseck (2009) suggests not to overwhelm the use pre-class material nor the use of Web 2.0 since those tools can block information processing, and can decrease the quality of learning on students.

The 94% of learners stated their disagreement on the fact that they restricted their study to what was specifically set, as it was not necessary to do anything extra. They claimed they did a great effort and spent enough time to review and complete the assignments in order to be well prepared for the classes with the tutor, as they felt more engaged in the learning process. These results are similar to the ones found by Yunus, Su, and Mohd (2012) who concluded that students perceived these new tools as more interactive and innovative, as well as the created environment because of the use of 2.0 tools was definitely accepted, consequently, their language proficiency had increased.

All the students showed a positive acceptance of the subject due to they found the material interesting and working hard worth the effort they made. In this regard, Conole and Alevizou (2010) refer to the advantages of adopting technology in higher education due to the importance of having a universal, just-in-time, and individualized learning that suits better this student generation since they already have the technical skills to manage many different tools (Anderson, 2007). From the interview, students mentioned that they felt more motivated to

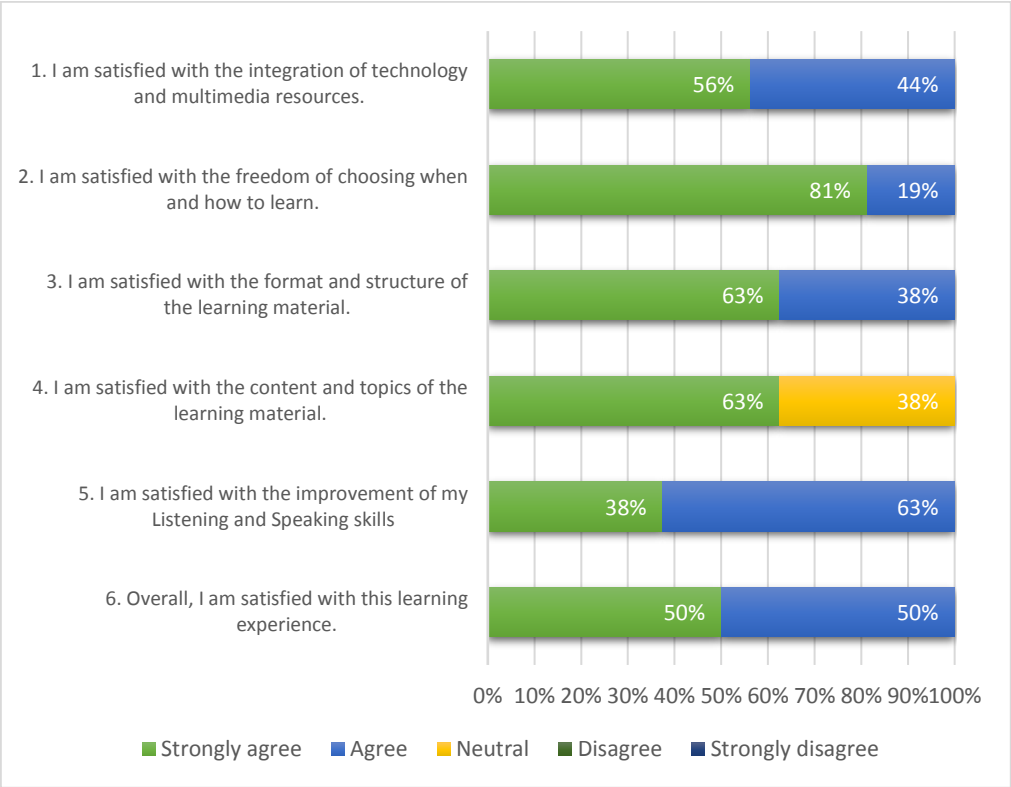
participate because they really used the language with their peers during the virtual session; in fact, they did not only improve their listening and speaking skills, but also reading and writing.

Consequently, the same 100% of the participants were in favor of using virtual tools in order to be more interested in the studied contents. In this regard, Kulakli and Mahony (2014) determined that as students use Web 2.0 tools in everyday situations, they are more likely to use these technologies for academic purposes. Similarly, Tyagi (2012) stated that Web 2.0 strengthened important aspects of learning that may be difficult to stimulate in learners since they are digital natives and are really engaged in using technology.

As noted above, studying Listening and Speaking turned much more enjoyable for students as they used new tools and a different strategy. The entire group of learners revealed a great satisfaction towards this new methodology; actually, an effective use of Web 2.0 turns important for students in this contemporary world, since they need a set of skills that weaken physical boundaries (Simões & Borges, 2008). Even though, it was the first time they used both the flipped classroom strategy, and Powtoon and VideoScribe, students successfully completed the virtual sessions and improved the target skills.

Learning satisfaction

The rapid development of the Internet technology enables learners to communicate and participate in multilingual communities around the world by using any technological devices or tools. ESL/EFL teachers and learners have benefited from the virtually boundless uses of this new tendency which promotes online learning. In this regard, based on the students' questionnaire, the levels of satisfaction concerning the use of the flipped class strategy and Powtoon and VideoScribe are high among the participants.



Graph 4. Students' satisfaction of the learning experience
Source: Student's questionnaire
Author: Cristina Morocho

Golshan and Tafazoli (2014) explain that the main goal of using technology in language teaching and learning which main goal is to discover ways for using technological tools for the purpose of teaching and learning the target language. For this reason, students were satisfied with the integration of technology and multimedia resources to the virtual sessions they attended for the Listening and Speaking class; 56% strongly agree with this statement.

As the flipped model and distance education demand, students are responsible for their own learning; in fact, students were satisfied choosing when and how to learn and study the contents that were prepared for the virtual class. This new methodology helped them to organize better their time and to set up a regular schedule for studying this subject. They felt free to repeat the parts that were more difficult and to review quickly the ones that were easier for each of them. As a result, they could understand more the contents and be well prepared for the in-class activities.

Regarding the format and structure of the material, participants expressed their satisfaction of using Powtoon and VideoScribe. The former was used to create animated presentations by working with pre-created objects, imported images, music and recordings; it was very easy to use and it could be played in the PowToon online viewer, exported to YouTube or downloaded as an MP4 file. The latter let the teacher prepare whiteboard animations in which effects, images, audio and text were included; these video files were exported to YouTube making it even easier for learners to use them.

With reference to the contents and topic, 63% were greatly satisfied with the topics studied. However, the 37% of students showed a neutral position; this happened because students found some topics from the book not that interesting for them, even though the contents were presented in an innovative way. Bearing this in mind, it is important to create interesting and dynamic videos; as Bergmann and Sams (2012) suggest, whenever is possible, to work with a colleague and not to make videos too formal in order to engage more the students in any topic.

In general, students were satisfied with the improvement of their listening and speaking skills. They felt more confident and proficient to use the language in different situations and contexts. From the interview, participants indicated that the listening skills they developed the most were two: recognize the communicative functions of utterances, according to situations, participants and goals, and distinguish between literal and implied meanings. Regarding speaking skills, they develop the most their ability to use appropriate styles, registers, redundancies, pragmatic conventions, conversation rules, interrupting, and other sociolinguistics features in conversations.

Unquestionably, the whole group of participants were satisfied with this learning experience since they were involved in meaningful activities and their time was mainly used for practicing. This encouraged students to teach and learn ideas from their peers with the guidance

of the teacher. By allowing students to take part in their own learning, they gained the knowledge they achieved, which in turn built confidence to speak and discuss any topic.

Academic performance

The flipped model enables students to move at their own pace and most of their individual needs are met through the flexibility the inverted curriculum offers, thus, student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions increased, student learning deepened, and academic achievement increased. Therefore, the academic performance of the participants is compared between the control and experimental group.

Hence, it is important to mention some important characteristics concerning the promotion of this subject; students approve the subject with a maximum score of 20 points and a minimum of 14 points in each mid-term. Particularly, for Listening and Speaking courses, students may obtain maximally 14 points by attending a total of six virtual or on-site class per mid-term.

In this regard, Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of each groups' grades. In both mid-terms, the students who participated in the flipped classroom got higher grades than the ones in the non-flipped classroom, they achieved 19 points on average in both mid-terms but the non-flipped group got 17 points. The standard deviation for the flipped group shows that the variation of those grades is around 1%; this means that it is not likely to have lower grades than 18 points. However, the non-flipped group shows a higher standard deviation, it takes around to 2%, in other words, the students may achieve grades from 15 to 19 points maximally.

Table 1. Comparison of the academic performance

Group	N	First Bimester		Second Bimester	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Flipped Class	10	19	0,85	19	1,28
Non-flipped class	9	17	2,34	17	1,88

Source: Student's questionnaire
Author: Cristina Morocho

From the results, it can be said that the flipped classroom strategy influenced the students' academic performance making it easier for students to improve their listening and speaking skills. Despite of the lack of significant differences between first and second bimester, the participants showed a great improvement in terms of fluency, organization of ideas and critical skills.

Similarly, Hung (2015) concluded in his study that the structured and semi-structured flip lessons were more effective instructional designs than the non-flip lessons. Moreover, both the structured and semi-structured flip lessons helped the students achieved better learning outcomes, developed better attitudes toward their learning experiences, and devoted more effort in the learning process. In conclusion, the flipped classroom constituted an effective approach to foster active learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The learning experience of using “VideoScribe” and “Powtoon” in a flipped class to improve listening and speaking skills was satisfactory for students. They showed a great acceptance towards the way in which the flipped classroom strategy was developed since they decided when and how to learn according to their schedules. The material presented, as well as the format and structure of the contents were highly acknowledged by the learners.

Based on the results, the flipped classroom strategy promoted higher grades and motivation on the members of the experimental group. The participants showed a great improvement in terms of fluency, organization of ideas and critical skills due to the type of activities they worked on during the virtual sessions each week.

For students, the use of the two target Web 2.0 tools, Powtoon and VideoScribe, seemed to be a good option instead of using the traditional PowerPoint presentations. The features of each tool were not difficult for learners to use, nor to understand, in the contrary, they found the new presentations and videos more interesting and dynamic to study.

Learners became more responsible since they knew that studying the contents before the virtual class was essential, otherwise, they would have felt lost or not been ready to participate properly in the activities that the teacher planned for the session; in other words, they would have not taken advantage of the whole class to improve their listening and speaking skills.

The majority of participants agreed on the importance of using class-time to work on debates, discussions or conversations that let them use the language and improve not only their listening and speaking skills, but also reading and writing skills. As a result, they felt their English proficiency in general increased since they were working on meaningful activities that required a high level of knowledge and language proficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is highly recommended to apply this practice with the lower levels of the Listening and Speaking program in order to help students achieve the learning objective by using time on practical activities and exposing them to an English environment.

For future researchers, it is advisable to have a big sample of participants, thus, more data could be gathered, as a result, it would allow researcher to draw more general conclusions on the effectiveness of using the flipped classroom strategy for improving listening and speaking skills.

Students all around the country may have the opportunity to use the institutional equipment in order to get connected to each virtual tutorial, since sometimes they may experience connection problems turning it difficult to follow the class as it is required.

From the research, it has been determined that the flipped classroom model seems to be a good option to foster the acquisition of the language, thus, different subjects may be taught under this model in order to promote a student-centered learning.

The application of different tools in class seems to be advantageous for students, due to the fact that they found it boring to use the same old tools every single class. Actually, students may feel more interested in learning how to use new tools for other subjects and purposes as it can be done with Powtoon and VideoScribe.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Student's questionnaire

MÁSTER EN PEDAGOGÍA PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

Dear student,

This questionnaire is aimed at asking for your experience on the adoption of Flipped classroom strategy in the Listening and Speaking IV subject during the academic period October 2016 - February 2017.

1. **Did you review the material before participating in class?**
a. Always
b. Often
c. Seldom
d. Never

2. **How much time did you study the lesson material out of class?**
a. Less than half an hour
b. An hour or less
c. More than an hour

3. **How many times did you review the material that goes with this lesson?**

_____

4. **You consider that the material was:**
a. Adequate and easy to understand
b. Neither relevant nor interesting
c. Complex and difficult to understand

5. **Based on your learning experience, select the option that best expresses your opinion on each statement.**

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. By working on the material in advance, I was able to make my own conclusions.					
2. I was not really interested in the lessons and class activities, so I kept my work to a minimum.					
3. Studying contents by myself was not helpful because I needed the teacher's guide.					
4. The contents studied in class were the important ones for me.					

5. I came to most classes with questions in mind that I wanted to be answered.					
6. I looked at most of the suggested materials and videos that went with the lessons.					
7. I used to spend extra time trying to look for more information about the topics of each unit.					
8. I spent some time finding out more about interesting topics which have been discussed in different classes.					
9. I generally restricted my study to what was specifically set, as I thought it was unnecessary to do anything extra.					
10. I worked hard during the subject because I found the material interesting and worth the effort.					
11. Using virtual tools has helped me to be interested in all the studied topics.					
12. I found that studying Listening and Speaking could be very enjoyable when using new tools and strategies.					

6. Based on your learning satisfaction, choose the answer that best expresses your opinion.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I am satisfied with the integration of technology and multimedia resources.					
2. I am satisfied with the freedom of choosing when and how to learn.					
3. I am satisfied with the format and structure of the learning material.					
4. I am satisfied with the content and topics of the learning material.					
5. I am satisfied with the improvement of my Listening and Speaking skills					
6. Overall, I am satisfied with this learning experience.					

Thank you

Annex 2. Student's interview

MÁSTER EN PEDAGOGÍA PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

1. **Did you attend any virtual class without studying the content before the session?**

   Yes ( ) No ( )

   Why?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. **Did you find it difficult to use Powtoon and/or VideoScribe?**

   Yes ( ) No ( )

   Why?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. **Which of the following listening skills you think you developed the most during the virtual sessions?**

a. Recognize the communicative functions of utterances, according to situations, participants, goals.
b. Infer situations, participants, goals using real-world knowledge.
c. From events and ideas described, predict outcomes, infer links and connections between events, deduce causes and effects, and detect such information, generalization, and exemplification.
d. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
e. Use facial, kinesthetic, body language, and other nonverbal clues to decipher meanings.
f. Develop and use a battery of listening strategies, such as detecting key words, guessing the meaning of words from context, appealing for help, and signaling comprehension.

4. **Which of the following speaking skills you think you developed the most during the virtual sessions?**

a. Use appropriate styles, registers, redundancies, pragmatic conventions, conversation rules, floor-keeping and –yielding, interrupting, and other sociolinguistic features in face-to-face conversations.
b. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as focal and peripheral ideas, events and feelings, new information and given information, generalization and exemplification.
c. Convey facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language.
d. Develop and use a battery of speaking strategies, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, providing a context for interpreting the meaning of words, appealing for help, and accurately assessing how well your interlocutor is understanding you.

5. **In general terms, how will you describe your experience on using the flipped classroom strategy and Powtoon and VideoScribe.**

Thank you.

Annex 3. Students' grades

# Students	First mid-term	Second mid-term	Type of class
1	19,65	20	Flipped
2	18,08	19,96	Flipped
3	20	19,7	Flipped
4	20	20	Flipped
5	19,63	18,78	Flipped
6	20	20	Flipped
7	19,75	19,78	Flipped
8	18,13	15,79	Flipped
9	19,55	19,34	Flipped
10	17,98	18,59	Flipped
11	19	18,28	Non-flipped
12	19,16	17,67	Non-flipped
13	15,43	14,24	Non-flipped
14	18,95	18,52	Non-flipped
15	20	15,78	Non-flipped
16	14,4	14,31	Non-flipped
17	15,75	19,69	Non-flipped
18	13,62	17,4	Non-flipped
19	17,51	16,63	Non-flipped