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Research Paper

Supporting Speaking Skills Development in EFL Teacher-Training Students via Flip During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study is set in EFL teacher training during the COVID -19 pandemic. The goal of this research study was to examine students' perceptions of the development of their oral abilities by means of weekly Flip video recordings. An action research design was carried out for EFL teacher-training students from a Chilean university. Synchronous English language sessions focusing on oral production were aided by asynchronous practice on the Flip platform. Content analysis was conducted to examine the students' perceptions of the use of Flip to facilitate the development of speaking skills. Co-occurring categories were identified, and related networks were produced to identify relevant nodes. Findings revealed favorable perceptions in both the linguistic and socioaffective aspects of learners' oral performance resulting from the weekly recordings. It was concluded that the use of Flip promoted the students' oral production by heightened positive socioaffective perceptions over the course of one academic semester during the time of COVID-19.

Keywords: Teacher Training; Flip, Oral Skills; Affect; Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT).

1. Introduction

During their undergraduate formation, English teacher trainees need to develop in parallel their pedagogical skills and an advanced level of English competence. Regarding the latter, oriented by the guidelines from the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2014), Chilean universities have set a C1 level as a minimum standard for graduating students, a requirement declared formally in graduates' profiles. The aim is to ensure that students can operate fluently and accurately in all language domains. In this vein, specialized methodologies are implemented to foster trainees' advancement, incorporating a wide range of activities, from focused linguistic practice to more spontaneous uses of the language, with a primary focus on the speaking ability. Oral skills receive special attention as actual performance per se is likely to reveal at first sight an English teacher's overall competence, like a personal card. Additionally, the relevance of the speaking ability lies in the fact that it is the primary vehicle through which linguistic modelling will be performed by teachers-to-be in their future pedagogical practices.

Speaking in the target language poses challenges to learners because they are required to simultaneously put into play the different linguistic levels (phonological, morphosyntactic, semantic, discursive, etc.), under the pressure of the communicative act, and the restrictions of personal cognitive capacities (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003). Furthermore, it has been suggested that linguistic performance will result from learners' attentional resources being directed in parallel towards task complexity, accuracy and fluency, and more recently added lexical use (Skehan, 2009). In this context, it is likely that trainees' external pressure to exhibit outstanding features of oral performance during training might raise negative affective factors, namely, anxiety and lack of self-confidence, which are core to the operation of the affective filter, and thus affecting language acquisition and performance negatively (Krashen, 1982).



The year 2020 saw the rise of emergency remote teaching (ERT) to become the default instruction modality due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This greatly impacted English teaching, with some obvious detriments in curricular activities targeted at oral skills development. What happened was that the traditional space for natural in-class interaction had been altered drastically, which made it difficult to design activities where technology would allow students to engage in oral communication that would favor output production in response to input, such as that found in actual pair work or group discussions.

This study explores English teaching trainees' perceptions on the contributions of a pedagogical intervention to favor oral skills by offsetting the shortcomings inherent to ERT during the COVID-19 pandemic. The intervention, which took place at a Chilean university, was organized as a set of activities which made use of the online tool Flip (formerly known as Flipgrid) during instructional time for which specific time was allocated. To this end, a virtual space was created where the students had to video record and share their weekly reflections on various issues around the theme of self-regulation, which prompted them to speak. Presumably, this ambience would enjoy features which are also present in face-to-face interaction, such as the presence of a speaker's and a listener's role; the latter, represented asynchronously by the whole class community.

This article is organized around the main elements of the action research (AR) cycle: problem identification, planning, teaching/acting, observing, and reflecting. The AR methodology was chosen to better respond to the detected learners' needs in the oral area which had been noticeably affected during the restrictions caused by the sanitary crisis, and which arguably leading to context-specific solutions and continuous improvement, as detailed in section 3.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Speaking Skill

The speaking skill is the ability to use language orally to communicate in an effective and thoughtful manner (Karzan & Bapir, 2021). This implies a rich form of communication which is carried out not only through consciously chosen and interpreted words, but also through paralinguistic elements, such as tone and other nonvocal phenomena closely related to spoken language, as is the use of gestures. Therefore, speaking requires "learners to build and share meaning through verbal and nonverbal symbols in a variety of contexts" (Chaney & Burke, 1998, p. 13).

Speaking is perhaps the most important skill for foreign and second language acquisition, as it is essential for communicating orally (Gürler, 2015; Lazaraton, 2014; Rao, 2019). This is an incredibly intricate act because many functions and features of the language system are involved in the process of communicating or negotiating a message. Moreover, in order to develop speaking, learners need to be able to master several subskills and use them spontaneously (McDonough & Shaw, 2003), which makes it challenging as it demands an active role from them. In some way, speaking truly reflects what they can do and where they can get to with language, with overall competence primarily being judged by conversational features rather than other linguistic skills; since it is assumed that for learners to become communicatively competent, speaking skills will play a large role in their general proficiency (Kenney & Banerjee, 2011; McDonough & Shaw, 2003).

2.2. Flip and the Speaking Skill

Flip is an educational digital tool that can be used to serve the purpose of fostering oral production in communicative-centered EFL/ESL courses. This resource, operating as an asynchronous video-based online platform, has proven to be an effective means to engage students in oral discussions, presentations, and reflections, among others, due to several of the features it sustains (Keiper et al., 2020). Either as a free mobile or web-based application integrated to Microsoft Teams, Flip constitutes a safe environment because its videos are not in the public domain, as is the case of YouTube. It is the teacher, who is the actual administrator, who can decide the duration of the video recordings to be made, ranging from 30 s to 10 min, and also, whether the recorded videos should be hidden (e.g., for purposes of personal reflections), or made visible to the rest of the class members (e.g., to conduct group discussions, foster collaborative learning or contribute to classroom community).

Flip can be employed to maximize exposure to the target language (Dettinger, 2018); in this sense, it would converge with the principles of the communicative approach. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (as cited in Richards & Rodgers,

2001) claim that in communicative language teaching (CLT), communicative competence is the goal, so, with learners being at its center, they can be supported by suitable devices appropriate to their age. Also, due to its nature, Flip seems to raise a natural interest in communicating, another prominent feature of CLT that is inherently motivating for learners as “students are expected to interact with other people” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 156-157).

Recent research has shown that the use of Flip can fit adequately for communicative tasks and to support and enhance students’ opportunities to communicate in the target language. A study conducted among 141 Japanese university students revealed that 56% of the learners perceived a significant improvement in their speaking ability and they also felt more motivated towards learning English as with Flip-based asynchronous lessons (Hammett, 2021). Similarly, a group of 30 learners of Arabic in a university in the U.S. perceived Flip not only as a useful tool to develop their language skills, but also felt more independent when learning, and confident in their performance (Mango, 2021). Another study in a 37-student ESL course in a Japanese university concluded that Flip assignments increased language interactions when the learners were prompted to speak, comment on posts, make questions and reply to them (Petersen et al., 2020). Additionally, a case study of 11 participants concluded that the use of Flip increased the English language learners’ oral communicative skills, and their motivation to speak (Difilippantonio-Pen, 2020).

Lazaraton (2014) suggests dialogue journals to develop speaking skills, a task where students are given a prompt to react in audio or video format with nonscripted (spontaneous) answers. Following these recommendations, Flip could be used to place speaking at the center of the teaching process during ERT, creating a communication channel to express ideas, learn collaboratively and reflect with others. Moreover, timely feedback might add a new significance to students’ responses considering that they could revisit submissions to verify and reflect on their performance.

2.3. Emergency Remote Teaching and Digital Tools

Although online learning had already been an essential part of education for decades (Perry & Pilati, 2011), the COVID-19 crisis forced educational institutions to resort to online instruction. Unlike online learning, which is carefully planned and designed, ERT was an imposed temporary solution to allow the continuation of teaching through an internet-connected device, with roughly the same materials and methodologies employed for in-class instruction (Bozkurt et al., 2020).

Despite its benefits and potential, ERT also represented a new source of pressure for learners, in addition to the sanitary crisis. With this modality, the opportunities that students would normally have to interact and practice oral language in the face-to-face classroom were drastically reduced. Despite instructors’ efforts to provide and engage learners in communicative situations to develop their oral skills, the obstacles encountered during ERT seemed to hinder students’ participation, as compared to a nonpandemic setting.

In a study involving 42 Turkish ELT students conducted during ERT, Google Meet was employed synchronously to boost oral participation and to encourage them to actively express their opinions during discussion sessions. The learners’ overall perception favored Google Meet as a means to support the development of their speaking skills through live presentations (Özışık, 2021). However, unlike Flip, Google Meet lacks the structured and interactive features to create and respond easily to video content, such as with interactive forum experiences that can be implemented on Flip for students to engage in asynchronous video discussion. Other digital tools frequently used during ERT to teach speaking skills were WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms, as reported by 301 Indonesian EFL preservice teachers (Kusuma, 2022). Whereas those platforms allow for the implementation of oral tasks online, their interfaces have not been designed as a space to collaborate in an organized fashion or to provide structured environments for video recording interaction. This stands in contrast with the features found in Flip, which appear optimal for learning purposes under a safe controlled atmosphere.

3. Action Research Methodology

This study is based on the AR model from the British Council (Ahmad, 2020) due to its concordance with the way in which pedagogical practices are handled in English pedagogy undergraduates’ training. As Figure 1 shows, the AR process can be visualized in five stages: (1) noticing a problem, the phase where a pedagogical aspect is identified as an issue in the teaching and learning process, (2) planning, the stage where intervention is carefully designed to offer solutions to deal with the teaching problem, (3) teaching/acting, the stage where the planned intervention is implemented,

(4) observing, the phase where researchers assess through systematic observation procedures how the intervention develops while making adjustments to better adapt to the teaching context, and (5) reflecting, the last stage that allows a deeper understanding of the problem's nature, and the impact and efficacy of the proposed intervention regarding its solution. The purpose of AR is "the improvement of professional practice and situations, and the development and testing of the practical theories that guide one's own practice and can be shared with others" (Burns, 2010; Feldman et al., 2018, p. 6; Negi, 2016). AR tackles a particular issue from the real classroom and contributes to broadening the knowledge of the teaching profession:

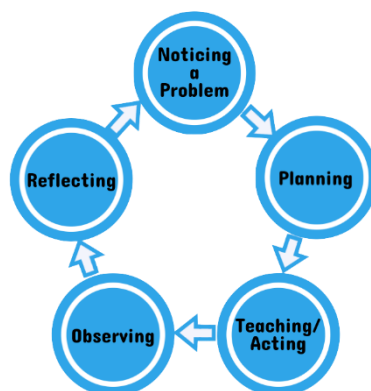


Figure 1. Action Research Cycle (Ahmad, 2020)

Although AR is a widely acknowledged and recommended approach for reflective teaching practices aimed at solving a problem within the educational context (Jiang et al., 2023), there remains a scarcity of studies employing AR methodology in the field of English language teaching during ERT as of 2023. This study serves as a contribution to EFL/ESL teachers who may need to initiate the use of AR in online or digital environments.

3.2. Noticing the Problem

The development of English pedagogy students' oral skills in teacher training programs at Chilean universities was greatly affected by the shortcomings of ERT during the COVID-19 pandemic, not to mention the instructors' scarce preparation for implementing online lessons. As the number of synchronous hours had to be reduced, learners experienced less exposure to the target language and had fewer opportunities to engage in communicative activities in the virtual setting. Students' attendance dropped dramatically and those who joined the live sessions seemed unwilling to open their cameras or activate their microphones. Additionally, due to connectivity-related issues, limited smooth participation was quite hindered during online sessions. Furthermore, a significant number of students did not comply with their asynchronous tasks and assignments, which was evidenced in the analytics and reports generated by the learning management system (Canvas).

In the specific case of the English Language course, when classes were traditionally delivered face-to-face before the pandemic, for students to develop oral skills, contents and themes were presented and practiced through communicative activities devised to maximize their opportunities to actively produce output and receive input in the target language. In a similar vein, in the Applied Linguistics course, practical activities were developed so that students could interact orally in the target language with a focus on applying and consolidating theoretical concepts. In these two subjects, in-classroom pair, group work, or group discussion instances were greatly reduced limiting the opportunities for students to engage in processing and producing oral language.

Thus, it was imperative for these courses to implement an online methodology that could give students more opportunities to systematically practice spoken English so that they could become more competent learners in their oral skills. This need gave rise to the present study, which is an AR intervention aimed at supporting English pedagogy students' speaking skills development during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3. Planning

This AR study was carried out in an undergraduate EFL teacher-training program at a Chilean university during the first semester of 2021, a period when instruction was fully implemented online due to the C-19 pandemic. Graduating students from such programs are expected to accomplish a level C1 of linguistic competence minimum (Council of Europe, 2001). Resulting from the special conditions inherent to remote teaching, syllabi and course programs saw the entry of innovative strategies aiming at counteracting some of the shortcomings of the online modality, in an attempt to achieve the stated goals more effectively. To do so, a pedagogical innovation was implemented to create conditions for an increased amount of oral production with new cohorts throughout the next semester, with a main focus on asynchronous oral production to support synchronous sessions of the program subjects English Language and Applied Linguistics.

The innovation involved students' regularly recording their reflections about various topics by means of the online video sharing platform Flip. Once the intervention cycle was completed, students' perceptions needed to be explored to determine its contributions to the development of their oral skills.

Thus, the AR main objective is to examine students' perceptions on the effects of Flip as a tool to foster L2 oral production, and the research question was made explicit in the following way:

- What are the students' perceptions on the contribution of an asynchronous intracurricular pedagogical innovation based on the use of the digital tool Flip to enhance their oral production during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3.4. Participants

Fifty-four English Pedagogy students whose L1 was the Chilean variant of Spanish participated in the AR project. They were incorporated into the study through intentional sampling, after they had signed an informed consent. The group consisted of 25% men, 72% women, and 3% indicated no sex; with ages ranging from 19 to 27 ($x = 20.31$; $SD = 1.56$). The participants were enrolled in three different course sections in the first semester of 2021, two of which corresponded to the English Language subject in the second year (41 students, B1 level), and one to a section of Applied Linguistics (13 students, B2 level) from the third year (see Table 1). These course sections were selected for the study as the linguistic detriments identified above had been evident in the said subjects in the year 2020:

Table 1. *Participating Courses and Number of Students, Cohort Years, and Proficiency Levels*

Subject	N of Students	Year	Proficiency Level
English Language	20	2 nd	B1
English Language	21	2 nd	B1
Applied Linguistics	13	3 rd	B2

3.5. Teaching/Acting

The intracurricular pedagogical innovation extended for a 10-week period, and it centered around the production of weekly Flip video recordings. An important focus of the intervention was on creating a set of communicative tasks that would serve as a framework on which students could reflect, elaborate, and then produce oral language. Before implementation, it was decided that the main theme running along this framework should be self-regulated learning, as it had been detected that prior cohort students lacked strategies to direct, monitor, and assess the achievement of learning goals that they were expected to set and accomplish by themselves (Lobos et al., 2021; Zimmermann & Moylan, 2009); hence, weekly activities included coverage of self-regulation subthemes such as goals versus habits, smart goals, forming habits, procrastination, addressing tasks, sleep health, among others.

Planning and submitting a video recording online can be time-consuming, especially if the user is unfamiliar with a given application; consequently, it was decided to assign a full teaching module solely to this activity not to affect students' workload in remote learning. Additionally, to favor students' positive disposition and engagement in the activity, an incentive score was entered within the course evaluation scheme, which was dependent on the sum of video submissions in the semester.

As seen in Figure 2, the pedagogical intervention can be roughly split into three temporal stages along the term, with weeks 1-5 and weeks 9-10 following the same format. These stages consisted of five weekly complementary

activities: (1) genially lessons, (2) Flip reflection, (3) feedback, (4) self-assessment, and (5) planner; all of which are described below.

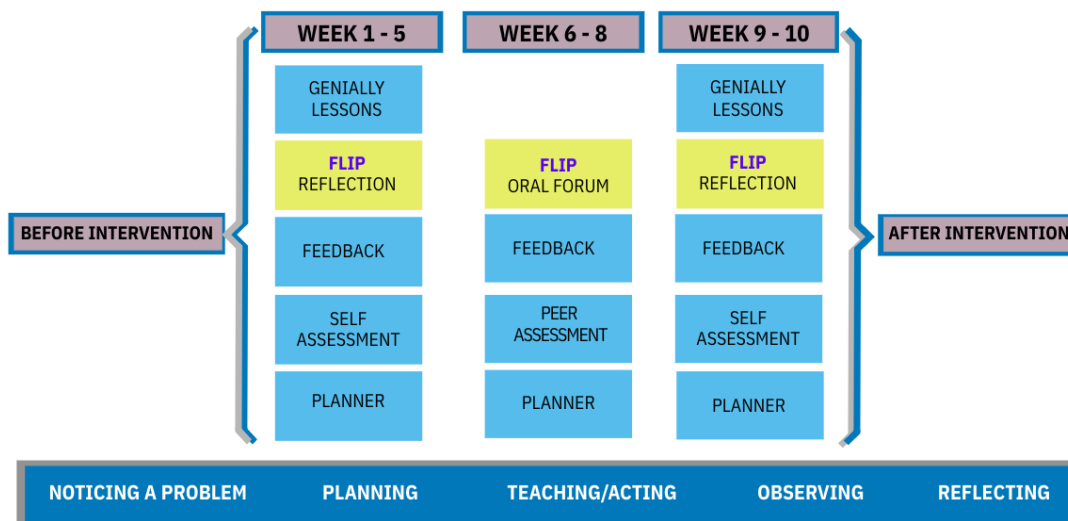


Figure 2. Pedagogical Innovation Stages

1. Genially lessons correspond to synchronous classes directed by the professors in charge, which were based on presentations developed by the research team at <https://app.genial.ly/dashboard>. A mixed-skills approach was implemented.
2. Flip reflection refers to the students' individual asynchronous work whose expected outcome was a 3- to 5-min video recording submitted weekly. These videos had to be created as a response to another video recorded by the professors themselves which acted as a prompt for the students' reflective process.
3. Feedback was provided on a weekly basis to the students' reflections in the form of written comments either entered directly on the Flip platform or sent to students as personalized messages. The feedback's nature was positive, corrective, or both, and was delivered by the professor and teaching assistant regarding linguistic and phonological aspects, as well as organization and clarity of ideas, and visual elements.
4. Self-assessment was integrated to the innovation to foster students' monitoring of self-regulated elements associated with their learning, as covered in the genially lessons. This was implemented as online questionnaires with multiple-choice questions and one open question enquiring about students' perceptions of their class attendance, participation, planner use, and actions taken to favour their learning.
5. Planner refers to the students' use of an organizer as a tool to plan academic and course-related tasks and engagements. The students were asked and encouraged to keep this planner from the beginning and along the intervention.

Weeks 6-8 differed slightly from the rest of the intervention weeks, with the students performing 4 activities: Flip oral forum, feedback, peer assessment, and planner. Basically, the differences from the other week's stages were: (a) no genially lessons were taught, and (b) students had to take part in a Flip video forum. The latter consisted of a 3-week video forum cycle: Firstly, students recorded a prompt-based video in week 6; secondly, they recorded video responses with comments to two classmates' videos, in week 7; and thirdly, they evaluated one classmate's video comments following a rubric centering around self-regulation elements, in week 8.

3.6. Data Collection and Analysis

With the purpose of examining the students' perceptions on the innovation to enhance oral production in remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, a process of content analysis was conducted on the students' oral texts from the videos submitted in week 10, which aimed at obtaining their views on the contributions of Flip to their oral skills development. Specifically, a thematic content analysis with an inductive approach was employed, with the identification

of initial emerging categories. Then, axial coding was performed to establish relationships between codes that enabled the exploration of more inclusive and representative categories. Once these categories had been processed, the body of content was reviewed for further consistency. The whole process was carried out by the four researchers taking part in the study; each of them observing and analyzing the corpus content, generating triangulation of the results that allowed for greater rigor and reliability. This process was further supported by the use of Atlas.ti 22.0.2 to consolidate emerging categories, identify co-occurrences, and create networks to visually represent data and illustrate the analysis.

The students' comments were analyzed with a bottom-up approach inspired by grounded theory philosophy. Common themes and prevalent topics were identified in the specific quotes delivered by students without imposing preconceived categories, allowing the analysis to emerge from the data itself. This funnel-like methodology guided the tagging process where labels were created based on the communality found. Then, through cross-analysis of students' responses using Atlas.ti, patterns, connections, and relationships among the labeled content were identified, leading to the recognition of categories with a higher level of inclusion. Subsequently, the researchers observed that the identified categories could be grouped into two dominant dimensions: linguistic and affective, decision supported by the specialized literature on second language acquisition (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Krashen, 1982).

4. Results (Observing)

Numerical data will be presented to give an account of the different emerging categories found as a result of the content analysis procedure. The tagging process yielded different results, expressed by the number of instances found for each category in two emerging dimensions, namely affective and linguistic. Propositional content will be examined to illustrate each of the categories in the form of oral reports, and networks to illustrate how all these categories intertwine and relate to one another.

4.1. Quantitative Results

The numerical data reported here were obtained from the propositional content reported on the Flip videos which, after being transliterated to a word processor, were then tagged and quantified, as shown in Table 2. Group 1, with 21 participants, produced the highest number of words (6,900), of which 2,683 were present in the quotations in which the emergent categories and subcategories were found, yielding 97 codes. Group 2, on the other hand, produced slightly fewer words (6,240) in their video reflections, consistent with fewer participating members. It was possible, however, to identify 111 quotations in 2,353 words from which 110 codes were used. Group 3, formed by 13 participants, produced 2,153 words, of which 871 were used in the quotations identifying the content of interest, producing 47 instances. These results are presented in this section to inform the later reflections on the research question related to the participants' perceptions of the effects of this asynchronous intracurricular innovation to enhance their oral production during the COVID-19 pandemic, by means of Flip.

Table 2. Language Learner Corpora From the Flip Videos

Groups	<i>n</i>	Text Token	Quotations	Codes	Quotation Token
1	21	6,900	92	97	2,683
2	20	6,240	111	10	2,353
3	13	2,153	48	47	871
Totals	54	15,293	251	254	5907

Note. Text token, number of words per text. Quotation token, number of words per quotation.

In relation to the corpus formed by the participating students' verbal reports on Flip ($n = 54$), it is possible to observe that groups 1 and 2, similar in number, produced texts of similar length (6,900 and 6,240, respectively). Group 3, on the other hand, with fewer participants ($n = 13$), produced consequently shorter verbal reports, with a total token of 2,153. Also, it is possible to observe that more than a third of the corpus words (5,907) are represented in the propositions (quotations), from which the different emerging categories were elicited in the tagging process. More than one code was tagged in some quotations:

Table 3. *Dimensions and Emerging Categories Instances per Group of Students*

Dimensions	Categories	Group 1 (n = 21)		Group 2 (n = 20)		Group 3 (n = 13)		Totals (n = 54)	
		*I	%	I	%	I	%	I	%
Affective	Positive Affect	19	7.48	25	9.84	9	3.54	53	20.87
	Working Environment	33	12.99	43	16.93	19	7.48	95	37.40
	Totals	52	20.47	68	26.77	28	11.02	148	58.27
Linguistic	Linguistic Aspects	31	12.20	25	9.84	13	5.12	69	27.17
	Learning Opportunities	14	5.51	17	6.69	6	2.36	37	14.57
	Totals	45	17.72	42	16.54	19	7.48	106	41.73
Totals		97	38.19	110	43.31	47	18.50	254	100

Note. *I stands for instances of coding occurrences.

From the content analysis, four emerging categories could be identified, and organized in two dimensions: affective and linguistic. The categories of positive affect and working environment were identified in the affective dimension, whereas the categories of learning opportunities and linguistic aspects were elicited in the linguistic dimension. As shown in Table 3, in the affective dimension, the category of working environment, referring to situations of anxiety, confidence and social interactions, is the most elicited among the 3 groups of participants with 37.40%, being, at the same time, the most mentioned propositions. This shows the importance of generating a positive atmosphere, a safe environment, and adequate conditions for learners to feel comfortable and supported during their learning process.

Meanwhile, the positive affect category reaches a 20.87% representation among the participants' opinions, highlighting the importance of enjoyment and positive feelings that the recording of these videos brought about in the emergency teaching mode. In the linguistic dimension, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency account for 27.17% of the elicitations, being the second most represented emerging category among the 4 identified in the analysis. The category of learning opportunities, referring to situations of language practice and feedback, is represented with 14.57%, which is also equivalent to the least represented category.

Table 4. *Categories and Subcategories Coding per Group*

Categories	Subcategories	Group 1 (n = 21)		Group 2 (n = 20)		Group 3 (n = 13)		Totals (n = 54)	
		I	%	I	%	I	%	I	%
Positive Affect	Enjoyment	5	1.97	16	6.30	2	0.79	23	9.06
	Positive Feelings	14	5.51	9	3.54	7	2.76	30	11.81
	Totals	19	7.48	25	9.84	9	3.54	53	20.87
Working Environment	Anxiety reduction	8	3.15	12	4.72	2	0.79	22	8.66
	Self-Confidence	16	6.30	17	6.69	7	2.76	40	15.75
	Space for Relationships	9	3.54	14	5.51	10	3.94	33	12.99
	Totals	33	12.99	43	16.93	19	7.48	95	37.40
Linguistic Aspects	Fluency	14	5.51	9	3.54	7	2.76	30	11.81
	Grammar	3	1.18	1	0.39	1	0.39	5	1.97
	Pronunciation	6	2.36	11	4.33	4	1.57	21	8.27
	Vocabulary	8	3.15	4	1.57	1	0.39	13	5.12
	Totals	31	12.20	25	9.84	13	5.12	69	27.17
Learning Opportunities	Language Practice	14	5.51	8	3.15	5	1.97	27	10.63
	Linguistic Feedback	0	0.00	9	3.54	1	0.39	10	3.94
	Totals	14	5.51	17	6.69	6	2.36	37	14.57
Totals		97	38.19	110	43.31	47	18.50	254	100.0

Note. I means instances of coding occurrences.

When looking at the data more closely, it is possible to observe the subcategories derived from each emerging category. In the analysis of the affective dimension, the emerging category of positive affect is broken down into enjoyment and positive feelings; the elicited instances of these two subcategories represent 20.87%. For the second category of the affective dimension, working environment, three subcategories were identified; anxiety reduction, self-

confidence, and space for relationships with a total of 37.40%, being the self-confidence subcategory the one that stands out with 15.75%. In the linguistic dimension, four subcategories emerged, fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, with a total of 27.17% of the identified instances. Fluency is the subcategory that stands out with 11.81%. The second category of the linguistic dimension, learning opportunities, represents 14.57% of the total elicited instances and is made up of the subcategories of language practice and linguistic feedback, the former being the one that shows the highest proportion in this section with 10.63%.

In relation to the co-occurrences that can reveal some association between the emerging subcategories, as shown in Table 5, it can be observed that four main relationships are produced. The strongest link is observed between the subcategories of fluency and self-confidence with 11 instances, followed by the co-occurrence of the latter with language practice with 7 links. Similarly, the language practice subcategory is in turn related to space for relationships with 6 instances and a similar number with anxiety reduction (5). These relations reinforce the idea that the affective aspects support the development of certain linguistics processes, in this case, the integrating skills of fluency and language practice. Other relevant co-occurrences that may be indicative of an association were positive feelings with linguistic feedback, and positive feelings with pronunciation, with 4 instances each. The former shows a link between the effect of the feedback and the emotions this pedagogical innovation caused in the participants, while the latter reflects participants' satisfaction when performing the speaking task. This is also observed between pronunciation and self-confidence (4 instances), and vocabulary and space for relationship, also with 4 instances of co-occurrences:

Table 5. *Affective and Linguistic Dimensions Co-Occurrences*

Subcategories Co-occurrences	Anxiety Reduction	Enjoyment	Positive Feelings	Self- confidence	Space for Relationships
Fluency	2	1	2	11	2
Grammar	0	0	0	0	1
Language Practice	5	2	1	7	6
Linguistic Feedback	0	0	4	1	1
Pronunciation	2	2	4	4	0
Self-Evaluation	0	1	0	1	1
Vocabulary	1	0	3	0	4

4.2. Qualitative Results

The propositional data reported here were obtained from the oral reflections reported on the Flip videos, which were analyzed using the content analysis methodology. In this section, we present the results of this analysis by means of the most representative networks of associations between the most relevant affective and linguistic subcategories. The propositional content was elicited from a language learner corpus of 15,293 words, of which 5,907 words were used in reports represented by 251 quotations. These networks were formed by means of the Atlas.ti 22.0.2 network tool, which allowed for the identification of the most represented subcategories in the analysis between the dimensions examined in this study, affective and linguistic. These results are presented in this section to inform the later reflections on the research question related to the students' perceptions on the effects of Flip as a tool to foster L2 oral production.

The first association we examine in this section is the one between self-confidence and language practice (see Figure 3). Self-confidence, the single most represented subcategory, belongs to the category of working environment under the affective dimension. The language practice subcategory, on the other hand, belongs to the category of linguistic aspects under the linguistic dimension; it is also a well-represented subcategory in the said dimension and the one that co-occurs the most across dimensions. Self-confidence is represented by reports like:

'Well, I think that, since I'm recording the Flipgrid videos, I feel a bit more confident' (by participant OC, C1),

'... And also, to gain more confidence because I didn't use to be like a very confident person with my English', (by participant NA, C1), or

'Uhm, I think these Flipgrid videos have helped me to gain more confidence in my abilities' (by participant FC, C1).

Whereas language practice is exemplified by statements like:

'The videos on Flipgrid helped me a lot because I always try to participate in classes, but it's not enough to have a good speaking, so this kind of video helped me to practice' (by participant KM, C2),

‘... And it is thanks to Flipgrid because it’s one of the few opportunities I have to practice my oral abilities, so I have to take advantage of them’ (by participant IE, C1), or

‘Uhm, I can practice my English a little bit because in my house there’s no one to speak English to’ (by participant TG, LA).

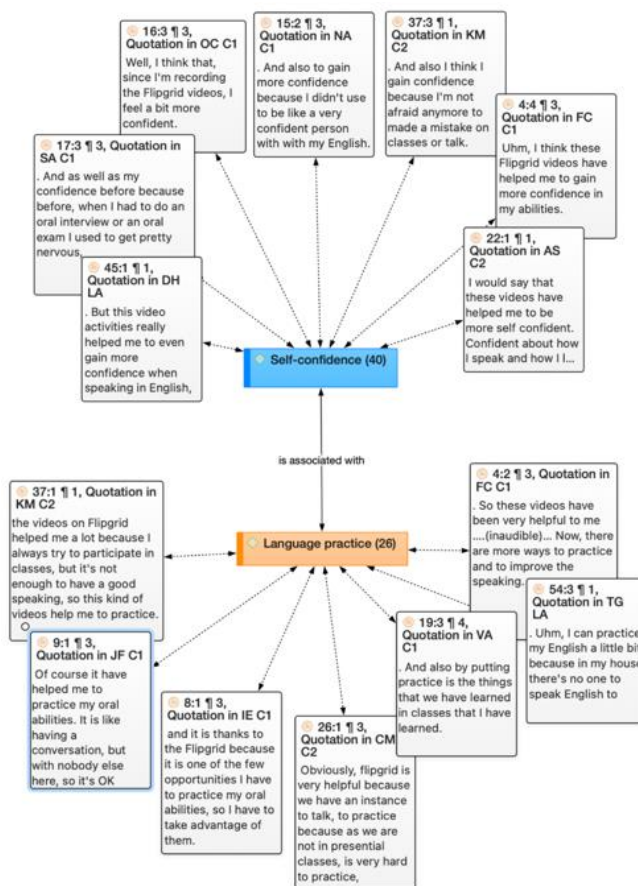


Figure 3. Self-Confidence and Language Practice Subcategories Network

The second association of interest is the one established between subcategories within a given dimension. In the affective dimension, two stand out, self-confidence and anxiety reduction, as shown in Figure 4. As illustrated in this figure, it is possible to observe the influence of self-confidence over anxiety reduction. Some instances of this influence can be seen in the following extracts:

[‘... And it helped me a lot to be more confident when I’m speaking and not to be afraid of mistakes, which is totally normal’ (self-confidence by participant CM, C2),

‘... And additionally, I, they, have helped me a lot in overcoming the fear of being wrong’ (anxiety reduction by participant ML, C1).]

[‘... And finally with my self-confidence. They helped me a lot because I never thought that I could do this. Speak in English. Do it’ (self-confidence by participant CV, C2),

‘Well, it has helped me to get bit better, although I was no used to speaking in English in front of other people. It has helped me a lot’ (anxiety reduction by participant CR, C2).]

[‘... And that helped me to have more confidence in classes in the online lessons’ (self-confidence by participant JF, C1),

‘I think it helps everyone and I am very glad that it helps me to feel more like comfortable speaking in front of the camera, especially’ (anxiety reduction by participant GA, C1).]

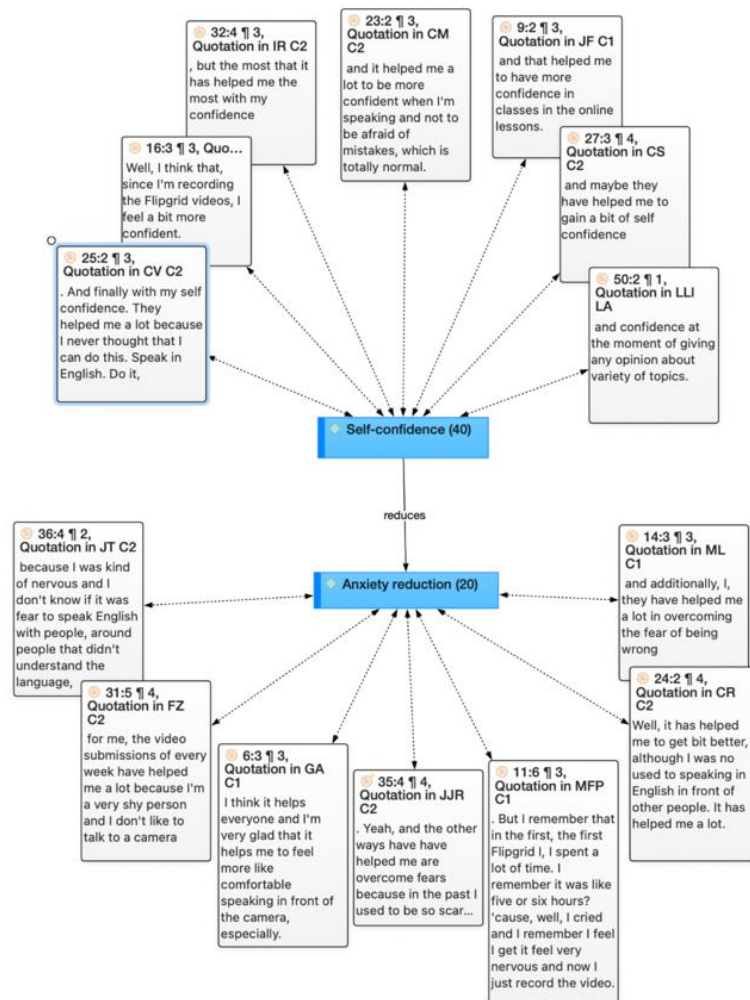


Figure 4. Self-Confidence and Anxiety Reduction Subcategories Network

The third association of interest was the one established between the subcategories of the linguistic dimension. In this dimension, the more salient ones were language practice and fluency, as shown in Figure 5. As illustrated in this figure, it is possible to observe that language practice contributes to fluency. Examples of this contribution can be seen in the following reports:

[‘... But after I say and practice these them here, I begin to accustom myself to use these words’ (language practice by participant ML, C1),

‘... Because it helps me to be more fluent and have a more casual, I guess I could say, speech you know’ (fluency by participant JT, C2).]

[‘We forget about, you know practicing and so we forget the words that we are learning. So the Flipgrid had had been really important in that matter also’ (language practice by participant HC, C1),

‘I think the Flipgrid videos have helped me in my oral abilities by being more fluent in the language’ (fluency by participant CS, C2).]

[‘Obviously, Flipgrid is very helpful because we have an instance to talk, to practice because as we are not in presential classes...’ (language practice by participant CM, C2),

‘... And I can notice more fluency at the time of speaking, and I think that it is because through these videos we, we have to speak...’ (fluency by participant OC, C1).]

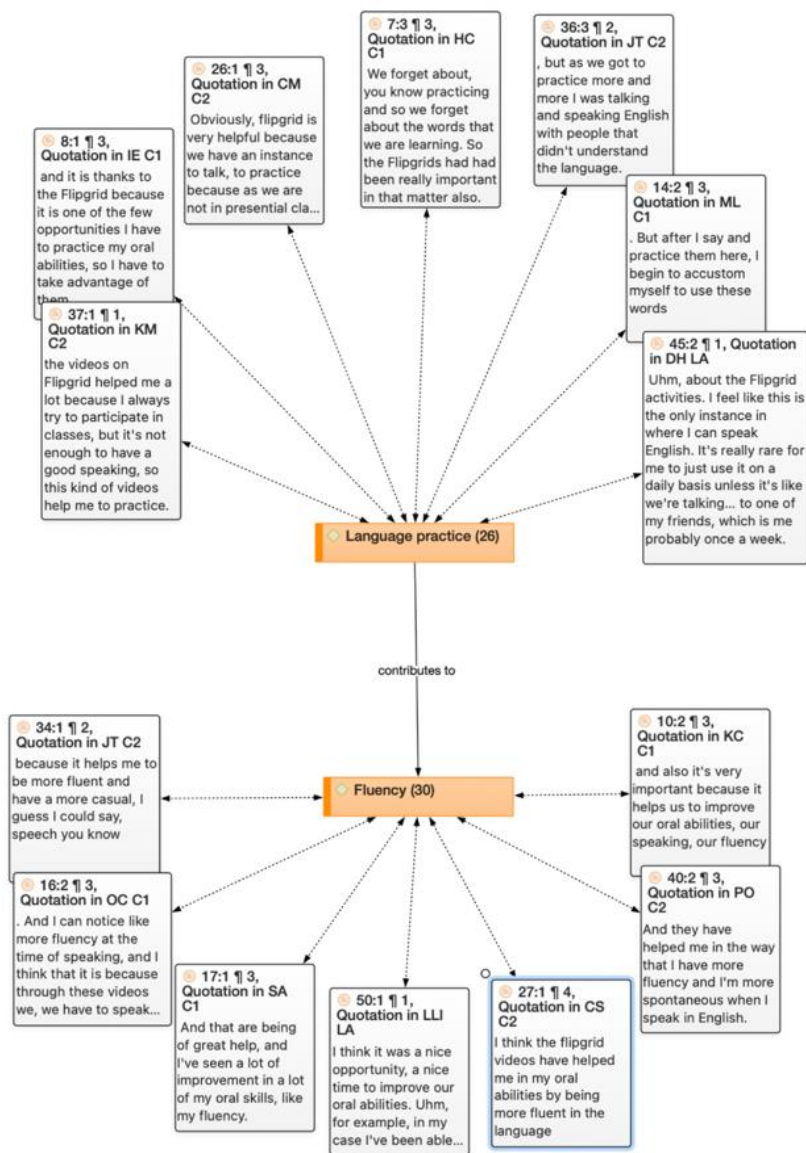


Figure 5. Language Practice and Fluency Subcategories Network

Regarding the way all subcategories interrelate, it is possible to observe that not only do they relate with a given dimension but also across, as shown in the interdimension network in Figure 6. As pointed out before, the linguistic subcategories of fluency and language practice are the ones that intertwine the most within and across the dimensions, followed by pronunciation. On the other hand, the affective subcategories that show more interrelated links are self-confidence and anxiety reduction, followed by positive feelings. In this figure, it is possible to see how the emerging subcategories elicited in the oral reports produced in the Flip video reflections by the participants are all influencing one another in different ways. For example, one very consistent relation is the one shown by grammar, vocabulary and language practice, they all contribute to fluency. Positive feeling also stands out by showing a close link with enjoyment and anxiety reduction, whereas language practice shows more varied-natured links with self-confidence and linguistic feedback:

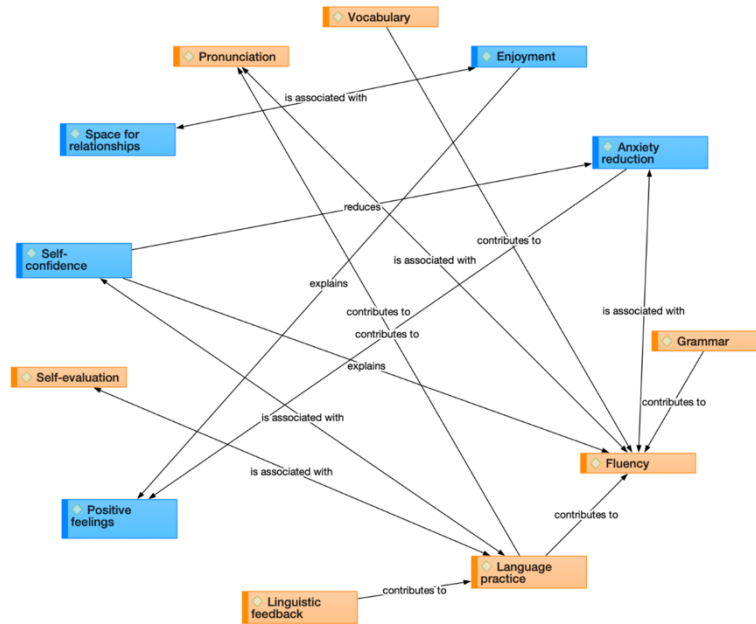


Figure 6. Affective and Linguistic Subcategories Relations Network

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The main aim of this AR study was to explore the participants' perceptions on the use of the online tool Flip to support speaking skills development during ERT. The AR methodology proved adequate to carry out the said goal and lent itself well to the creation and adaptation of digital material for the involved courses during the sanitary crisis (Sanhueza-Campos & Díaz-Vargas, 2022). The main findings suggest that Flip does support the development of different aspects of the speaking skill.

Firstly, the linguistic dimension proved to be regarded as important because it was the means for participants to practice the oral component. The linguistic aspect that is most favored by the students across the different groups was fluency, followed by language practice, which suggests that Flip does offer a way to enhance language performance through systematic practice fostering fluency, and also giving way for the improvement of oral elements such as pronunciation (Difilippantonio-Pen, 2020). Additionally, some features of the pedagogical intervention and of Flip itself seem to be operating together positively to make learners feel that they are having an increased amount of quality practice compared to the limiting conditions associated with ERT. These ideas seem to be in agreement with Dettinger (2018) who highlights that Flip helps to maximize exposure to the target language. Together with that, the design of the intervention, which made use of prompts that students had to reply to in video form, required them to elaborate and produce oral language within a range of spontaneous to scripted language; this is in line with Lazaraton's (2014) suggestion that video dialogue journals elicited by prompts are adequate to stimulate spontaneous language.

Secondly, the affective dimension stands out as the most valued aspect of the digital tool used in this teaching innovation. From the affective viewpoint, the most highlighted aspect of the intervention was the fact that the participants experienced higher levels of self-confidence, as this tool provided them with a constant guided practice, which also contributed to lower anxiety levels, as they felt this virtual practice place was a safe and private environment to express ideas and show how oral abilities strengthened over time.

The results obtained show a significant prevalence of socioaffective elements related to the implemented pedagogical practice. The affective dimension proved to be the most prevalent of those mentioned, with a higher percentage of responses linked to the working environment. In this way, it is possible to observe that the methodological strategy significantly favored greater enjoyment, more positive feelings while learning English, greater self-confidence (Mango, 2021), the perception of a more adequate space for the development of interpersonal relationships, and less anxiety. It is possible that the effects on the reduction of anxiety and greater self-confidence originated in the pedagogical

strategy which allowed for more task planning and speech preparation, stimulating students to practice, review, and improve their oral performance before public exposure (Petersen et al., 2020).

These results connect with the view of active learning. Students' participation promotes deeper acquisition since they learn not only about the declarative contents, but also allows them to execute and practice, observe their performance, and develop strategies to improve it (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Maluenda-Alborno & Varas-Contreras, 2021). By observing your own improvement, you enhance your perception of your own ability (competence; Ryan & Deci, 2018).

Similarly, enjoyment and positive feelings emerged from the collaborative environment Flip offered. The online learning environment generated by the intervention fostered social exchanges and associations among students, promoting dynamism and interaction. As evidenced in previous research in virtual environments, these factors not only reduce potential isolation, boredom and monotony but also stimulate contact and interconnection, creating a better workspace (Maluenda-Alborno et al., 2022a). These results underscore the importance of a working environment based on collaboration, enjoyment, and positive emotions, especially during confinement and forced isolation (Maluenda-Alborno, et al., 2022b). This is because social isolation has shown a negative effect on participation, motivation (Ali & Smith, 2015; González-Tovar & Hernández-Rodríguez, 2021) and even on mental health (Scotta et al., 2020; Peltzer & Pengrid, 2017).

Regarding the elicited co-occurrences, it is important to point out that the reduction of anxiety, greater self-confidence as well as the space for interpersonal interactions clearly lead to greater language practice. Although it is not possible to determine causality, an association among these elements is observed that could be a requirement to stimulate higher linguistic production. In this way, students who perceive these conditions are more willing to produce language and perceive themselves as more orally capable. Self-determination Theory can be useful to explain these results (Ryan & Deci, 2018). From this perspective, participation and engaged behaviors arise from the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Feeling competent (students believe in their own capabilities) and related to others (perceive good relationships) influence more motivation and participation (Fredricks et al., 2019); on the other hand, perceiving a threatening environment could be discouraging.

Flip not only became a facilitating tool to foster oral interaction in remote teaching during times of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it also offered learners an environment to asynchronously reflect, exchange knowledge, and collaborate with peers through positive comments and feedback on the platform (Iglesias, 2021). This underscores the usefulness and value of such a digital tool, which creates adequate and safe learning conditions for exceptional times. Moreover, systematicity in the use of Flip and carefully planned activities added value to the academic intervention, as this contributed to regular oral practice and interaction in the L2 in the online modality.

One of the projections of this AR study is to account for the effect of this intracurricular intervention on the participants' speaking skills development. Future endeavors with the use of Flip should include measurements in the gains of linguistic features for oral ability.

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Information on Informed Consent or any Data Privacy Statements

Informed consent was obtained from all the participants involved in the study.

Author Contributions

The individual contributions of the different authors of this paper are described as follows. Conceptualization, methodology, software application, formal analysis, investigation, data curation, original draft preparation, writing-reviewing and editing, visualization: Y.C.-S.; R.O.-T. and C.S.-C. Supervision, project administration, funding acquisition: Y.C.-S. Format and editing: C.S.-C. Conceptualization, methodology, and investigation on the Educational Psychology field: J.M.-A.

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethics Board Approval Statements

Data were treated anonymously and confidentially, collected after informed consent. Information was guarded by the main researcher on personal equipment by access code. Singapore Statement recommendations were strictly followed. Certification document is available upon request.

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