Volume 3 | Issue 2 | 2023

http://langedutech.com

Language Education & Technology

Flipgrid: A Scaffold to Enhance Speaking Skills

Ruby Vurdien *

White Rose Language School, Spain; https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6011-5606

Suggested citation: Vurdien, R. (2023). Flipgrid: A Scaffold to Enhance Speaking Skills. *Language Education & Technology (LET Journal), 3*(2), 121-136.

Article Info

Date submitted: 02/07/2023

Date accepted: 07/09/2023

Date published: 08/09/2023

Research Article

Abstract

Flipgrid, an online learning platform, has the necessary features that can enable students to record their views on videos to create discussion topics under teachers' guidance. It acts as a scaffold, as students can prepare their thoughts prior to their engagement with their peers in classroom debates. Their language production is enhanced due to their having checked the grammatical and lexical structures, and exchange of ideas is more fluent. Flipgrid has been a useful tool during the pandemic since students have been afforded the opportunity to practise their speaking skills remotely. This research study examined the use of Flipgrid as a learning tool to enhance students' speaking skills. Using teaching discussion prompts, the participants composed their responses, which they recorded on videos that they posted on the Flipgrid platform on a bi-weekly basis, followed by pair and small group discussions in the classroom. The aim of the study was to explore (a) the students' perceptions of enhancing their speaking skills, by recording their videos on the Flipgrid platform prior to classroom interaction, and (b) how Flipgrid can benefit students in improving their speaking skills. Data were gathered from two questionnaires, interviews, pre- and post- tests, and the students' recorded videos. The findings showed that the participants' overview of their learning experience was positive as they felt more confident to express their views. Flipgrid was deemed a convenient tool since it is user-friendly and permits students to interact with each other.

Keywords: Flipgrid, speaking skills, peer interaction, scaffold, second language acquisition.

1. Introduction

In Second Language Acquisition mastering speaking skills is important for many second language learners (Burns, 2017), and to be competent they must combine various skills, strategies, and types of

* Ruby Vurdien. White Rose Language School, Spain
e-mail adress: whiterose_va@yahoo.es

knowledge (Goh, 2016). Developing speaking proficiency "involves increasing the ability to use these components in order to produce spoken language in a fluent, accurate and socially appropriate way, within the constraints of a speaker's processing" (Burns, 2013, p. 1967). In terms of knowledge, learners need to understand grammar in relation to spoken language and different types of speaking genres (Goh, 2016; Goh & Burns, 2012). The teaching of the speaking skill can pose a problem for many teachers, because of the complexity of spoken interaction and a failure to reach an agreement about which appropriate approaches should be adopted (Bygate, 2001); at the same time, many students think that the process of speaking a language can trigger anxiety (Cetin Köroğlu, 2019). Teachers are therefore concerned about how to create the necessary environment for their students to attain their communicative goals (Hammet, 2021). With the rise of 21st century learning skills and the implementation in the classroom of technological tools such as podcasts, videoconferencing, videos and speech recognition software, students' motivation to develop their speaking skills has increased (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014). One example of such tools is *Flipgrid*, a free platform designed for educational purposes, and which became popular during the pandemic. Students can post a video in response to their teachers' questions and can also comment on their peers' videos (Difilippantonio-Pen, 2020; Maclsaac, 2020; Lowenthal & Moore, 2020).

Several studies (Cárdenas Sánchez & Naranjo Lozada, 2021; Fajardo-Guapisaca & Argudo-Garzón, 2022; Hammet, 2021; Lowenthal & Moore, 2020) have reported the usefulness and effectiveness of using Flipgrid as a learning tool. It allows students to interact with their peers, thereby facilitating communication in learning situations (Taylor & Shawver, 2020). It is a user-friendly video platform on which students can participate in video-recording exchanges, which can improve their discourse, pronunciation and interactive communication skills (Kiles *et al.,* 2020; Lim *et al*., 2021). Furthermore, it has been found that this tool can reduce students' anxiety about learning English, as well as affording teachers the opportunity to assess their students' attitudes towards its application (Tuyet & Khang, 2020). It has been reported that there is limited research on the effectiveness of incorporating Flipgrid into foreign language learning (Hammet, 2021). Consequently, to contribute to this line of inquiry, the present study describes the use of Flipgrid as a scaffold to engage a group of EFL students in pondering their views on different issues prior to their face-to-face class interactions. It seeks to explore: (a) the students' perceptions of enhancing their speaking skills by recording their videos on the Flipgrid platform before discussion in the classroom; and (b) how Flipgrid, as a learning tool, can benefit students in improving their speaking skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Technological tools and development of speaking skills

The aim of teaching speaking is to help students to develop their communicative competence. Speaking means building and sharing meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols in different types of contexts (Chaney & Burk, 1998). In the 21st century the incorporation of a plethora of digital tools such as the Internet, podcasts, videoconferencing, discussion boards and speech recognition software (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014; Parveen, 2016; Yahya *et al*., 2019) has facilitated students' development and enhancement of speaking skills. Thanks to these digital tools, students are afforded the opportunity to interact with their peers at a time and in a place convenient for them. According to Sosas (2021), students' oral performance, including their pronunciation, improves by means of technology. Previously, asynchronous discussion boards tended to be text-based; today, however, a number of applications that enable video-based discussions, such as VoiceThread or EdConnect, have emerged. These tools allow students to engage with each other seamlessly by creating threaded comments (Lowenthal & Moore, 2020), and this can result in an enhancement of their language fluency, accuracy and complexity (Goh, 2016; Idayani & Sailun, 2017). Video applications foster social interaction, while at the same time

reinforcing oral production and course content outside classroom settings (Romaña Correa, 2015). Meanwhile, digital storytelling, a short multimedia story that combines voice, image, and music (Benmayor, 2008), is another tool that can encourage students to practise their speaking skills. The latter helps students to organise their thoughts, ask questions, voice their opinions, and communicate their ideas in a clear and relevant manner (Ohler, 2013). Similarly, Flipgrid, the learning platform employed in the current study, has been perceived as a medium for presenting features that can assist students in developing their proficiency in speaking.

2.2. The benefits of Flipgrid as a tool to enhance speaking skills.

Flipgrid is a social and digital learning environment, which was developed in 2014 by Professor Charles Miller at the University of Minnesota to engage his students. It is, therefore, a relatively new educational tool (Young, 2018) in the field of language learning. This video discussion platform allows teachers to create virtual communities, by posting discussion prompts which will encourage students to generate responses through short video recordings, thereby fostering peer interaction as a means of improving their speaking skills (Green & Green, 2018). Students regard Flipgrid as an opportunity for engaging in continuous interaction due to its different social features, which represent a conversation (Clark *et al*., 2015). It is designed to empower students whilst at the same time facilitating collaborative and social learning between students in a way that is not possible with text-based discussions (Saçak & Kavum, 2020). It is a user-friendly tool that enhances communication and makes it enjoyable for students. As with threaded discussion forums, Flipgrid seamlessly creates threaded comments between students via short video replies (Lowenthal & Moore, 2020), which increases its potential for learning to take place. Teachers can monitor students' ability to edit their videos and allot time slots for their recordings, which means that, if necessary, students can re-record their videos and, if so required, can use different functions within this learning tool to hide their appearance on their videos. Consequently, Flipgrid provides a safe environment for both teachers and students. Since teachers can design and post recorded lessons on the platform, it promotes an autonomous digital learning environment for students (Difilippantonio-Pen, 2020), who can therefore plan their tasks at their own convenience.

Several studies (Bartlett, 2018; Lim *et al*., 2021; Petersen *et al.* 2020) have reported on students' positive attitude towards the use of the Flipgrid platform to practise their speaking skills and increase communication efficiency in terms of body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice (Huertas, 2021). In a study conducted by McLain (2018) on Business English Writing students in Korea, the findings showed Flipgrid to be an effective learning tool in that context. The participants were requested to produce four spoken assignments at home between classes. The teacher evaluated them by measuring the time spent on recording each video, and also informally monitored their performance in their assignments. Many students commented that they had noted an improvement in their speaking ability and an increase in their confidence due to this additional speaking practice. In their research, Lowenthal and Moore (2020) made use of Flipgrid for video-based activities in three online graduate courses in the USA to explore their students' perceptions of using the tool; the results indicated that the students enjoyed it due to its user-friendliness. Furthermore, in their study on HyFlex (hybrid flexible) delivery modality business courses in the USA, Keiper *et al*. (2021) concluded that course delivery should be focused on interaction, and Flipgrid is deemed a convenient tool to increase students' interaction in any course delivery method (Tello, 2008). Students' interaction and the level of satisfaction they experienced were significant in their improvement (Keiper *et al*., 2021). Tuyet and Khang (2020) studied a group of EFL high school students in Vietnam and found that Flipgrid had a positive effect on decreasing learners' anxiety and stress when speaking English. Similarly, Mango (2021) investigated students' perceptions of the effects of the use of Flipgrid on their learning experience, in terms of both its advantages and disadvantages. The thirty participants involved were studying Arabic as a world language (AWL) in America. They reported that Flipgrid provided them with a safe and low-stress platform for language

practice. They were allowed to track their language progress because this tool enabled them to listen to their own voice, check their pronunciation and language appropriacy, and attempt to improve their performance. As a result, they were assisted in terms of confidence building regarding listening and speaking skills. Additionally, they considered Flipgrid to have an influence on their social and cognitive engagement in the classroom. However, some students pointed out the lack of immediate feedback on the video recordings as a disadvantage. Another study, conducted by Ismiati *et al*. (2022) on a group of students in Indonesia, examined the use of Flipgrid as an electronic portfolio to assess speaking skills. The results showed that the students had improved their speaking skills and their motivation had increased. Finally, Hammet (2021) designed a small-scale study at a public university in Japan, to examine the efficacy of Flipgrid in his students' speaking activities in an online asynchronous environment. The overall experience was positive and the students' motivation and speaking ability increased throughout the course.

Theoretical framewok

In the last few decades there has been a shift from passive to active participation in language learning (Glava *et al.*, 2017), and learners need to communicate and exchange information with their peers to achieve the common goal of developing their speaking skills. In the same vein, constructivism suggests that learners develop their knowledge of the target language through social interactions and reflections on their learning experiences (Simina *et al*, 2005). This is in line with social constructivism, which emphasises that learning takes place through interactions with other students, teachers, and the whole world (Vygotsky, 1978). The constructivist learning theory argues that students learn best when they are actively engaged with others (Meyer, 2014) in contexts that are meaningful to students based on their personal experience. The application of this learning theory has significant relevance concerning the use of technology in language learning. Vygotsky (1978) posits that "language is the main tool that promotes thinking, develops reasoning, and supports cultural activities like reading and writing", (p.57). Flipgrid, considered an effective platform facilitating personalised discussion and deep personal connection (Green & Green, 2018), fosters active learning, since students lead and manage online video discussions in a social environment. In compliance with constructivism, students in the present project were afforded the opportunity to think critically about and reflect on the views expressed by their peers in the online video-based discussions prior to their face-to-face class debates. In other words, Flipgrid can be employed as a scaffold to assist students in the enhancement of their speaking skills, the teacher's role being that of promoting engagement and discussion by means of prompts which will aid students in the construction of knowledge.

Consequently, and in view of the opportunity the Flipgrid platform gave the participants in the current research to construct and record their ideas on video, which allowed them to use language to negotiate meaning, share opinions, clarify, and discuss solutions, a social constructivist approach was adopted to appraise the benefits of Flipgrid as a learning tool.

The current study aims to further contribute to existing research into the development of speaking skills by examining the effectiveness of the students' learning experience on the Flipgrid platform. The following two questions guided the study:

(a) What are the students' perceptions of enhancing their speaking skills on Flipgrid?
(b) How can Flipgrid benefit students in improving their speaking skills?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

To motivate students to practise and enhance their speaking skill during the Covid pandemic, when both online and face-to-face classes were organised, a project was designed for one semester (January-June 2021), in a private language school in Spain, for a group of EFL students (n=18) at B2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference. The participants were requested to complete their bi-weekly tasks on the Flipgrid platform prior to their face-to-face discussions in the classroom. Using the discussion prompts (Table 1) provided by the teacher, the students composed their responses by recording and posting their videos on the Flipgrid platform at their own convenience, which was made possible due to the asynchronous nature of the task. They were then paired and asked to leave a comment on each other's videos. To maintain the consistency of the project, student pairings remained unchanged for all the tasks; in this way, the students would not feel uneasy about having to change partners on a bi-weekly basis, and a seamless development of the video interactions would be possible. As a follow-up classroom activity – either in pairs or small groups – they were encouraged to discuss their views on the different themes of their video recordings by means of other related prompts. It was hoped that such speaking exercises would assist them in developing or enhancing the speaking skills required for their B2-level English examination. In total, each student recorded eight videos and participated in eight class discussions. Prior to the commencement of the project, the students were given a brief explanation of how to use Flipgrid as a learning tool, and they rapidly familiarised themselves with managing the application, which, in their view, was user-friendly. Figure 1 below shows the procedure followed in the project.

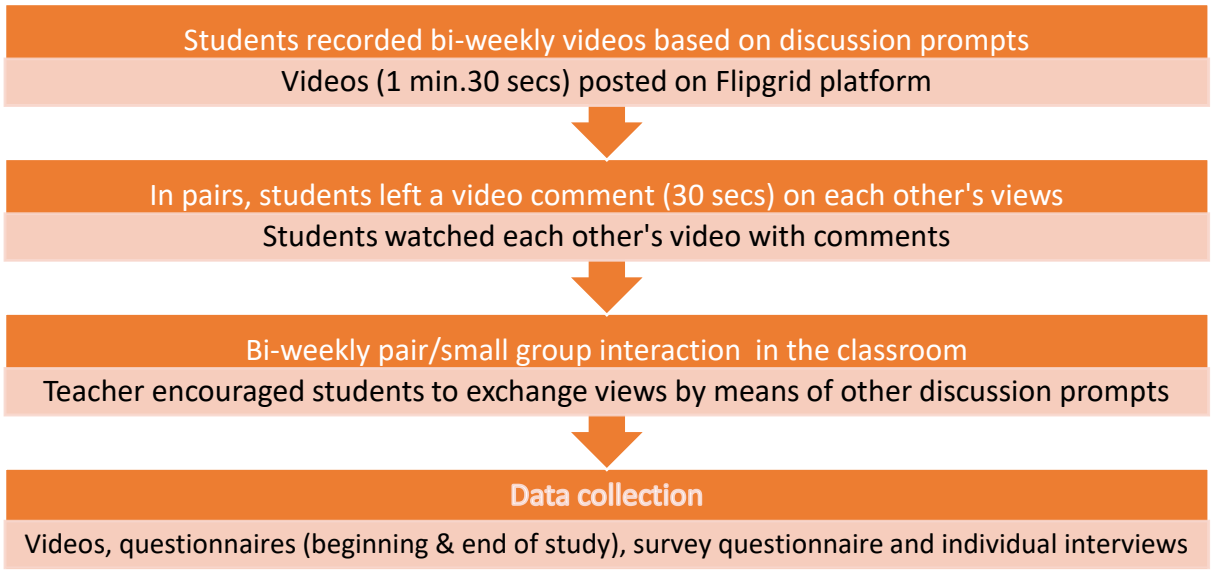

Figure 1. Procedure

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted among 18 students (ten females and eight males) preparing for their Cambridge English examination at level B2. Their target was to obtain the corresponding certificate at the end of the semester, which explained their interest in actively engaging in the study, as they would benefit from additional speaking practice. Their ages ranged from 18 to 29, and they were either studying different undergraduate or post-graduate degrees, namely, medicine, computer science, business, languages, and engineering, among others, or working in private companies. Not all of them had yet attained a B2 level at speaking, and therefore their proficiency in this skill varied.

3.3. Video recording tasks

Eight different topics representative of themes commonly encountered in their speaking examination were selected to trigger the students' interest in preparing their one-minute-thirty-second videos. They were encouraged to plan their speech by using the discussion prompts (Table 1) and consulting a word reference dictionary, spell-checker, or any other online resources of their choice, to ensure that grammatical and lexical structures were correct and appropriately used. They were expected to record their speech in a natural way and not by simply reading out their script in front of the camera. Next, in pairs, they had to watch their partner's videos and leave a thirty-second comment on each other's views. As a follow-up class activity in pairs or small groups, they were provided with the opportunity to interact face-to-face with their peers and discuss in greater depth the views they had recorded in their video speeches. Table 1 shows the topics and questions that prompted the students in their task performance.

Table 1. Topics discussion prompts

Topics	Prompt questions (Flipgrid platform)
1. My goals	What are your current goals in life? How do you plan to achieve them? How often do you set goals for yourself? How do you feel when you reach your goals?
2. Sport	Do you like to exercise? How often do you exercise? Would you like to be a professional sportsperson? What would be the advantages and disadvantages?
3. Healthy habits	What three habits will improve your life? What is your diet like? Do you have a balanced diet? In your view, does eating healthily lead to longevity?
4. Family values	What values have your parents passed on to you? Do you think it is important to follow your parents' advice? What traditional values are not important or not necessary now?
5. Male and female roles	Do women in Spain have equal opportunities in their workplace? Do parents and teachers encourage children to grow up differently? Do you think women and men should perform the same or different roles?
6. Immigration	Why do people immigrate to other countries? What are the advantages and disadvantages of immigration? Should immigrants be required to learn the local language and culture? Would you consider emigrating one day? If so, for what reasons?
7. Advertising	Do you prefer advertisements on TV / the radio / the Internet, in newspapers / magazines or in the street? Do you think advertising is an art? Do you think advertising is a clever way of lying about products?
8. Social media	How important is social media in your life? Do you rely on social networks to get local, national, and international news? What dangers do social networks pose? Could you live without social networks? Why (not)?

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

This study followed both a qualitative and quantitative approach. Data were collated from several sources: students' videos (n= 144); two questionnaires administered at the beginning and end of the project; and individual interviews, which were recorded by the teacher-practitioner upon completion of the study. The questionnaires, consisting of three multiple-choice and six open-ended questions each, were shared with the participants on Google Forms. The initial questionnaire gathered data concerning the students' experience of using Internet video-based applications, including Flipgrid, and their expectations of participating in the project. The final questionnaire aimed to collect additional data about their perceptions of their learning experience, and how Flipgrid could benefit them in enhancing their speaking skills. Furthermore, two speaking tests (pre- and post-) were organised to assess the students' progress in speaking. These tests were graded by the teacher-practitioner and examined two criteria, namely, grammatical and lexical resource (combined as one criterion), and discourse management. The Cambridge English Language Assessment marking scale (1-5) was employed to ensure credibility. Scale 1 signifies a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms and a range of appropriate vocabulary for discussing everyday situations; whereas scale 5 refers to successful use of both simple and some complex grammatical forms, together with vocabulary, which will enable them to exchange views on a wide range of familiar topics. Regarding discourse management, this considers the relevance, coherence, cohesion and extent of students' production of language. Scale 1 signifies mostly relevant contributions and the use of basic cohesive devices, whilst at scale 5 students will produce extended language with a clear organisation of ideas and a range of cohesive devices.

The students were paired with the same partner for assessment in both face-to-face pre- and post- tests. The format of the test strictly replicated the requirements of the real speaking examination, with each student being given a minute to compare two photographs and answer a question related to both; this was followed by a brief comment (thirty seconds) from their partner regarding the same theme. The teacher-practitioner listened very carefully and evaluated their performance in accordance with the analytical scales. An additional survey questionnaire comprising thirteen statements was completed by the participants at the end of the project for further data collection. A five-point Likert scale (1-5), varying from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (I strongly agree), was used to gauge the students' reactions to the study. The data from the survey questionnaire were extracted and inputted into Excel to calculate the mean scores of the statements. The other two questionnaires and the responses recorded in the individual interviews provided qualitative data, and the themes that emerged were coded for each question. Each student's recorded video speeches were viewed by the teacher-practitioner to check task performance, that is, whether the comments were relevant to the subject and the timing allotted to each task was appropriate.

Prior to their participation in the research, a consent form was signed by all the students, who were informed of the confidentiality of their data and the opportunity for them to withdraw from the study at any time.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The survey questionnaire (Table 2, statement 1, mean = 3.83 and median = 4) shows that the students' general overview of their learning experience was positive, since they unanimously reported that they enjoyed this novel approach to practising speaking skills by means of recording videos on Flipgrid. This finding is supported by some students' responses to their interview question: 'What did you enjoy most about the project?

"It was nice to record myself on Flipgrid because I didn't feel stressed at all".

"It was relaxing to practise my speech on my own without my peers looking at me".
"I felt free to speak without my classmates around me".
"I enjoyed recording my speeches because I was alone at home".

Ten participants also mentioned in both their questionnaire and interview that they found it interesting and fun to create their videos and watch those of their peers, and at the same time learn from each other's views. All the students agreed that Flipgrid had helped them to gain confidence in speaking (Table 2, statement 13, mean = 4, median = 4), a finding that tallied with several other studies (Cárdenas Sánchez & Naranjo Lozana, 2021; Difilippantonio-Pen, 2020; Fajardo-Guapisaca & Argudo-Garzón, 2020; Ismiati *et al*., 2022; Mango, 2021; Mohamad Hsbollah, 2021). They found the prompt questions helpful (Table 2, statement 8, mean = 4.61, median = 5) and the different issues they had to comment on interesting (Table 2, statement 7, mean = 4.44, median = 4.5). Consequently, they were motivated when it came to expressing their views on their videos (Table 2, statement 10, mean = 3.88, median = 4). They were able to engage in consistent and coherent exchange of opinions with their partners in class by putting into practice the language now familiar to them because of their Flipgrid video tasks (Table 2, statement 12, mean = 4,22, median = 4). They reported that they had enjoyed their peer interactions in class (Table 2, statement 11, mean = 4.11, median = 4), which, in their view, had played a significant role in improving their self-confidence. Here are some quotes from one interview question regarding the development of their self-confidence: 'Do you feel more confident in speaking now?'

"I have now lost my fear of speaking with my peers in class after practising on videos and discussing with my mates in class."
"I'm usually shy and don't like speaking, but now after recording my videos and practising with my peers in class, I feel very confident."
"What I enjoyed most was using the words in my videos when speaking to my peers in class. I feel more confident in speaking now."
"The videos and interacting in class have helped me to be more confident when I express my ideas. I'm no longer nervous in class."

However, two students highlighted the fact that they were nervous and uneasy when speaking in front of the camera and appearing on the videos, since they were more accustomed to face-to-face interaction with their peers in the classroom. This, in their view, was more natural, due to the spontaneous feedback received from their partners and the use of body language to facilitate comprehension. Flipgrid was thought to be a useful application to record speeches (Table 2, statement 2, mean = 4,6, median = 5), an opinion shared by most of the students (n = 16), since they were allowed to practise speaking on their own for a limited amount of time (one minute 30 seconds). This functionality of Flipgrid proved to be valuable in this project, as it enabled the teacher-practitioner to establish a time limit for the video presentations; in this way the students would be familiarised with this constraint in the real examination. Moreover, the additional practice afforded outside the classroom was very much appreciated, as some participants (n = 11) explained in their interviews that this had been instrumental in their developing their fluency.

When responding to the interview question: 'Do you think Flipgrid has helped you to improve your speaking skills?', some participants stated the following:

"I now feel that I can speak for one minute without any problem."
"The more I practise my speeches on Flipgrid, the better I become. Flipgrid is a very good tool to improve speaking skills. I can now speak easily for one minute."
"I could see my own progress and was happy to be able to use new vocabulary in my speeches… I also checked the pronunciation of words."

Table 2. Survey questionnaire

Statement	Mean	Median	SD
1. I enjoyed recording my video talks on Flipgrid.	3.72	4	0.57
2. I found Flipgrid to be a useful tool to record my talks.	4.6	5	0.60
3. I could make changes to my video talks whenever I wanted.	3.83	4	1.15
4. I found it very easy to use Flipgrid to record my video talks.	4.83	5	0.51
5. I spent a long time to prepare and record my video talks.	2.50	3	0.83
6. I was able to prepare and record my video talks very quickly.	3.88	4	1.07
7. I found the issues we had to talk about interesting.	4.44	4.5	0.61
8. I found the prompt questions helpful when preparing my video talks.	4.61	5	0.60
9. I used a dictionary/word reference to help me prepare my video talks.	3.33	4	1.28
10. I felt motivated to express my views in my video talks.	3.88	4	0.83
11. I enjoyed interacting with my peers in class on the subjects of my video talks.	4.11	4	0.75
12. I used the ideas in my video talks to discuss the issues with peers in class.	4.22	4	0.64
13. I felt more confident in speaking after recording my talks, followed by interaction with my peers in class.	4.00	4	0.84

All the participants considered one salient feature of the Flipgrid tool to be its user-friendliness (Forsythe & Raine, 2019; Iona, 2017; Ismiati *et al*., 2022; Kiles *et al*., 2020; Lowenthal & Moore, 2020). This is substantiated in the findings (Table 2, statement 4, mean =4.83, median = 5) regarding the simplicity and helpfulness of this resource. It permitted them to record and edit their videos (Table 2, statement 3, mean = 3.88, median = 4) as many times as they wished, to ensure both clarity in their video presentations as well as coherence in their discourse. Regarding this, these are some of the comments relating to the interview question: 'What are the advantages of using Flipgrid?'

"I would recommend Flipgrid as a tool to improve speaking skills because it's so easy to use."

"I could watch my videos many times and changed what I wanted and this helped me to practise my speaking."

"I recorded my video speeches several times until I was happy and I became more confident."

"I love Flipgrid because it's such a simple tool to use."

The results of the pre-and post-tests (Figures 2 and 3 below) show the progress observed when the students' discourse management and use of grammatical and lexical structures in their utterances were assessed. Half of the students (n = 9) improved their mark in discourse management by 0.5 between the pre- and post-tests, as can be seen in Figure 2. Concerning grammar and vocabulary, only three students increased their mark by 0.5 (Figure 3). Two students mentioned in their interviews that they would have appreciated feedback in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in both their Flipgrid video speeches and peer interactions.

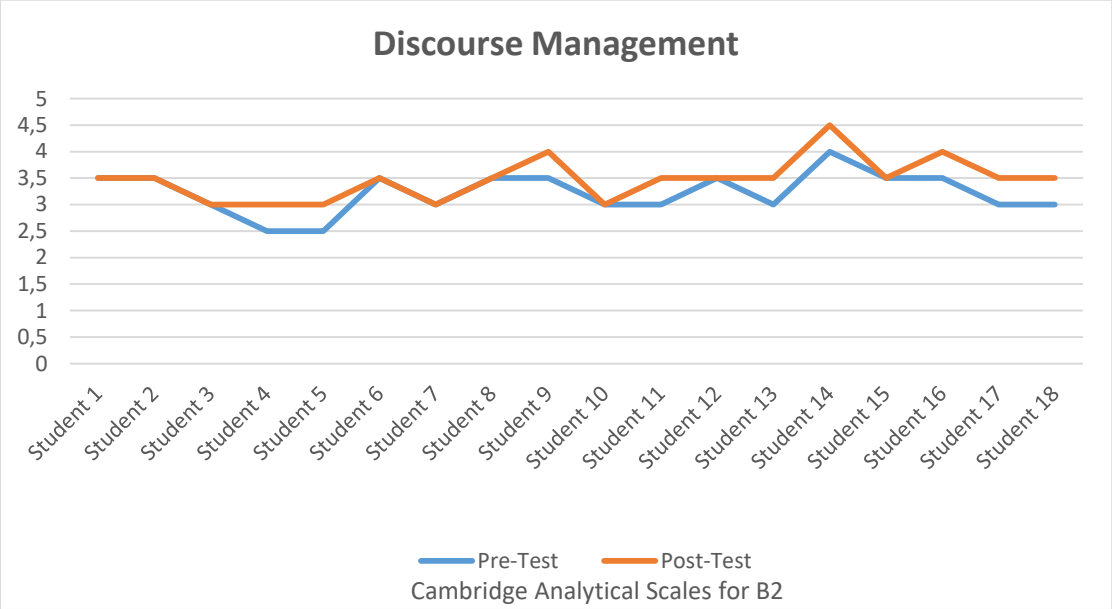

Figure 2. Discourse management

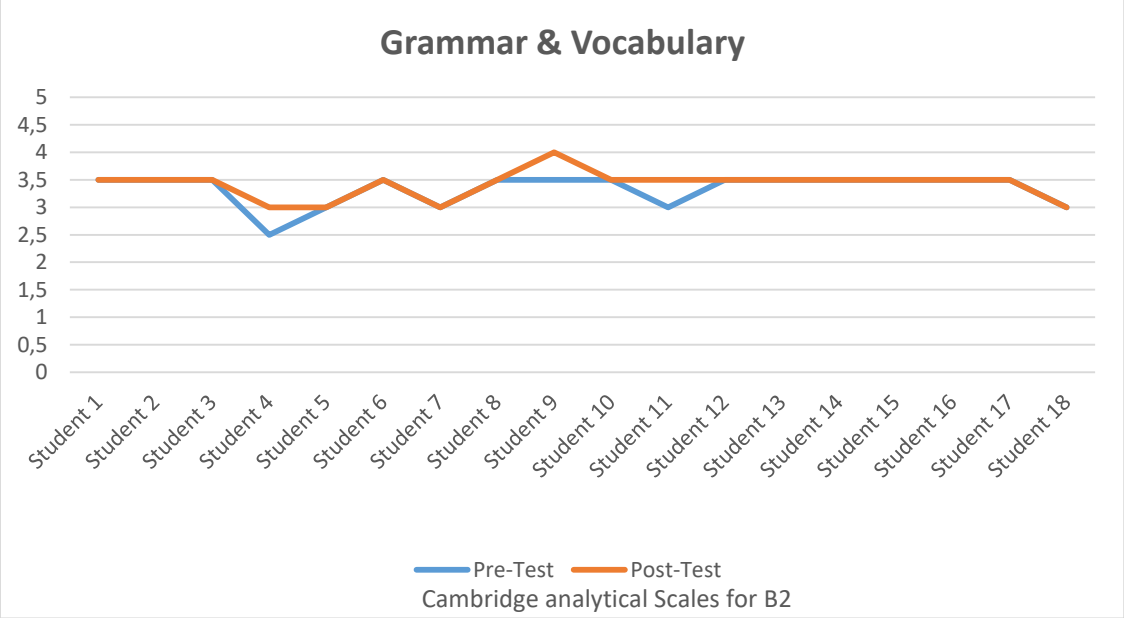

Figure 3. Grammar and vocabulary

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1 Students' perceptions of enhancing their speaking skills on Flipgrid

The participants' positive learning experience in the present research corresponds to findings in other research studies (Budiarta & Santosa, 2020; Fajardo-Guapisaca & Argudo-Garzón, 2020; Hammet, 2021; Kiles *et al*., 2020; Lim *et al*., 2021; Lowenthal & Moore, 2020; Mohamad Hsbollah, 2021 ; Tuyet & Kang, 2020). The students said that they felt stimulated because they were able to work on their own, in the comfort of their home and at their own pace. This created a more relaxed and non-threatening atmosphere, which is conducive to language learning. Such convenience offered by Flipgrid was a feature greatly valued by the students.

Despite Flipgrid being deemed a tool that can inspire students to be creative and share ideas with each other in an entertaining way, some students can feel uncomfortable when recording themselves, as reported in this study; a finding also emergent in previous research (Hammet, 2021; Lowenthal & Moore, 2020), where several participants expressed a feeling of discomfort in showing their face on their videos. This can result in reduced participation and limited engagement from such students. It is, therefore, crucial to give detailed instructions to students respecting exactly what the tasks on Flipgrid entail so that they are fully aware of what is expected of them. Perhaps, as recommended by Hammet (2021), those who are shy or do not feel confident enough to appear on their videos could simply use a photograph when recording themselves to ensure that task performance is carried out smoothly. Additionally, students could upload on Flipgrid videos created on other platforms. In other words, they can select the manner that suits them best to record and present their ideas.

The peer-to-peer engagement in the classroom stimulated discussion and increased the students' positive feelings regarding social interaction. Furthermore, it allowed them to use their prior knowledge, mediated via discussion prompts on Flipgrid, to reflect on each other's views to construct knowledge. This learning experience is relevant to the constructivist theory, as argued by De Guerrro and Villamil (2000), since they were actively engaged with their partners in meaningful contexts (Meyer, 2014), aided by the use of technology. Peer interaction had an important impact on the students' oral performance and self-confidence, as shown by some of the above-mentioned comments made in their interviews (Section 5). Therefore, Flipgrid can be conceived as a convenient medium for students to prepare their views before negotiating meaning to reach an understanding of the issue under discussion. This can lead to an increase in self-confidence and a reduction in anxiety.

As Dyer (2015) argues, video-based applications provide students with the opportunity to evaluate their strengths and areas where they need to improve in speaking. Thus, in the current study, Flipgrid allowed students to correct their mistakes, check the appropriate use of grammatical and lexical structures, and even pronunciation of certain words prior to recording their speeches. In that way they endeavoured to produce accurate language without their teacher's assistance, thereby fostering autonomous learning.

4.2.2. How Flipgrid can benefit students in improving their speaking skills

Although all the students in the current research agreed that Flipgrid is a practical tool due to its being simple to use, some participants in another study found this platform to be challenging to use, and that the tool had certain limitations because of its incapacity to facilitate face-to-face interactions (Taylor & Shawver, 2020). Furthermore, non-verbal cues like body language or facial expressions are not captured on Flipgrid as effectively as in face-to-face interactions. This can pose a problem for students to gauge each other's emotions or engagement to facilitate comprehension, as two participants revealed in this research. However, this scaffold medium promoting the development of speaking skills can, as discussed above, be used to assist students in preparing their views prior to peer discussions in the classroom. This would be beneficial for students insofar as it develops not only their interactive and communicative skills,

but also, potentially, their performance in the digital environment (Kiles *et al*., 2020), thus successfully enhancing their digital literacy skills. Hence, it can effectively benefit students by developing various skills simultaneously.

Another aspect of Flipgrid that the students regarded as being worthwhile was its accessibility. It permitted them to customise their video responses, that is, to plan and organise their ideas independently based on the discussion prompts. The repeated viewings of each other's videos contributed considerably to their exchange of ideas in the classroom. Flipgrid, therefore, fosters active learning (Green & Green, 2018), and permits students to construct their own understanding in a shared social setting, which is aligned with the constructivist theory, as argued above. For this reason, they believed they were able to engage effortlessly with their partners in this context. This is consistent with other research findings (Ismiati *et al*., 2022; Forsythe & Raine, 2019; Kiles *et al*., 2020), confirming that Flipgrid is a suitable tool that can promote the enhancement of students' speaking skills. As students tend to prefer video-based discussions to text discussions (Clark *et al*., 2015; Skylar, 2009), one of the affordances of Flipgrid is that students can see and hear each other, which is beneficial since it appears to be a more hands-on approach than the passivity implied when reading texts.

As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3 above, there was a difference in some students' (n = 9) marks between the pre- and post-tests. This could be attributed to their constant practice in recording their videos and their exchange of ideas in the classroom. However, those students (n = 9), whose marks remained unchanged in the post-test, commented in their interviews that they usually encountered difficulty in expressing their views in both online and face-to-face modes of learning. They were not always able to produce extended stretches of language, which might have been due to a lack of fluency. Consequently, it would take longer for an improvement in their speaking performance to be noticed. This concurs with the view of Canto et *al*.,(2013) that there would be a greater likelihood of more proficient students attaining a higher mark in the post-test than the less proficient ones.

As for grammar and vocabulary, surprisingly, hardly any progress was noted. This could mean that, unlike writing, speech is more commonly unplanned (Burns, 2017), and, therefore, the students were having to respond spontaneously to the questions relating to the task in the tests, thereby not paying sufficient attention to proper use of grammar and vocabulary. In contrast, their recorded video speeches generally displayed a choice of vocabulary and grammatical structures similar to B2-level requirements. In this context, most of them reported in both their questionnaire and interview that they had scripted their speech prior to recording themselves to avoid making errors. Obviously, it may not be easy for all students to achieve this objective by themselves, and, therefore, the teacher could help to raise their awareness of the importance of making the appropriate use of grammatical and lexical resources to enhance their speaking skill. Additionally, as two students said, teacher feedback on these would be beneficial for students to improve their performance in the target language.

5. Conclusion

Flipgrid, a novel technological tool, can create a learning environment outside the traditional classroom setting, by granting students the possibility of adopting a self-learning approach and benefiting from peer engagement to enhance their speaking skills. The present research explored the students' perceptions of Flipgrid as a tool to record their videos, and how, combined with classroom peer interactions, it can benefit them as a scaffold to improve their speaking skills. Notably, this asynchronous video-based application (Lowenthal & Moore, 2020) can empower students, since it fosters their autonomous learning and they can study at their own convenience. Flipgrid is perceived as a user-friendly medium and permits the scaffolding of speaking activities, which is compelling in terms of increasing students' oral fluency and self-confidence. Furthermore, it decreases speaking anxiety and boosts students' motivation to learn

(Nuridah *et al*., 2021; Syahrizal & Pamungkas, 2021; Tuyet & Kang, 2020). As Lowenthal and Moore (2020) highlighted, very little research has been carried out into students' perceptions of using Flipgrid as a learning tool. Consequently, the current study has contributed to that area of research. The overall attitude of the participants was positive, as concurs with other findings, and this is indicated in the results and discussion sections (5 & 6.1.) above. Additionally, the students reported that they had become more confident when speaking and that they had lost their fear of speaking in public.

Although the study was of short duration, some progress was noted in terms of the students' oral proficiency. Additionally, as mentioned above (6.2), the lack of teacher feedback, also emergent in previous research (Hammet, 2021), might have had an influence on the students' performance in grammatical and lexical structures. Teacher feedback should not be neglected for the benefit of students' learning experience, and some may need it more than others to achieve their objective.

Despite its small scale, this research has shed some light on the use of Flipgrid and peer engagement in the classroom discussions to improve speaking skills. Meaningful learning occurred through students' interactions mediated by the teacher-practitioner's role as a facilitator of knowledge, which conforms to the social constructivist theory (Shah, 2019). Flipgrid, a new communication technology, cannot replace face-to-face interactions, but can act as a scaffold and assist students in preparing their responses prior to their participating in their class debates. Its inherent affordances, mainly the video, look promising for helping students to engage with one another not only online but also in the classroom (Lowenthal & Moore, 2020). Teachers, then, should be prompted to exploit the potential of Flipgrid beyond their traditional classroom boundaries to enhance the learning process.

6. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

After an analysis of the findings that emerged in the present study, there are certain limitations that should be addressed in future research. Firstly, due to its being a small-scale project, the results cannot be generalised, and it would be advisable to choose a larger sample of participants for wider data analysis. Secondly, the fact that the study lasted for only one semester has possibly influenced these results, since more progress might have been observed over a longer period of time. A more extensive project would, therefore, be appropriate to analyse the outcomes of the learning experience, which could be compared with the current findings. Thirdly, task performance was limited to an amount of time spent on Flipgrid, which means that students were not free to extend their video responses as much as they might have liked. Tasks could be redesigned to enable students to create longer videos, and for peers to leave longer comments on each other's views. Fourthly, the students always worked with the same partners throughout the project, both online and in their face-to-face classes. They obviously became well acquainted with each other as a result, and it would be advisable to reassign the pairings or groupings in a new study to examine students' reactions when engaging with different counterparts on each task. The findings might vary in that case. Finally, the teacher-practitioner's role was limited to assigning the tasks on Flipgrid and organising peer discussions in the classroom. As a consequence, it would be helpful in future research to explore teacher feedback and its effect on students' learning on the Flipgrid platform.

References

Bahadorfar, M., & Omidvar, R. (2014). Technology in teaching speaking skill. *Acme International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, *2*(4), 9-13.

Bartlett, M. (2018). Using Flipgrid to Increase Students' Connectedness in an Online Class. *Learn Magazine*, 12(9), 11-15. doi:10.1145/3302261.3236703

Benmayor, R. (2008). Digital storytelling as a signature pedagogy for the new humanities. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 7(2), 188-204.

Budiarta, I. K., & Santosa, M. H. (2020). TPS-Flipgrid: Transforming EFL Speaking Class in the 21st century. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 9(1), 2-60. doi:10.25134/erjee.v9i1.3824

Burns, A. (2017). Research and the teaching of speaking in the second language classroom. In E. Hinkel (Ed), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Volume III, Edition 3(pp. 242-256). New York: Routledge.

Burns, A. (2013). A holistic approach to teaching speaking in the language classroom. In M. Olofsson (Ed), *Symposium 2012* (pp. 165-178). Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Bygate, M. (2001). Speaking. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp.14-20). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Çetin Köroğlu, Z. (2019). Interventionist Dynamic Assessment's Effects on Speaking Skills Testing: Case of ELT Teacher Candidates. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 10(3), 24-31.

Chaney, A. L., & Burk, T. L. (1998). *Teaching Oral Communication in Grades K-8.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Clark, C., Strudler, N., & Grove, K. (2015). Comparing asynchronous and synchronous video vs. text based discussions in an online teacher education course. *Online Learning*, 19(3), 48–70. http://dx.doi.org/10.24059/olj.v19i3.668

De Guerrero, M. C. M., & Villamil, O. S. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual scaffolding in L2 peer revision. *The Modern Language Journal*, *84*(1), 51–68. https://doi.org/10.1111/0026-7902.00052

Difilippantonio-Pen, A. (2020). *Flipgrid and second language acquisition: using Flipgrid to promote speaking skills for English language learners* (Master's thesis, Bridgewater State University, USA). Retrieved from https://vc.bridgew.edu/theses/75 on 10 February 2023.

Dyer, K. (2015). The importance of student self-assessment. Retrieved from https://www.nwea.org/blog/2015/the-importance-of-student-self-assessment/ on 15 March 2023.

Fajardo-Guapisaca, M. M., & Argudo-Garzón, A. L. (2022). Oral skills and Flipgrid platform in English as a foreign language learners. *Revista Arbitrada Interdisciplinaria KOINONIA Año VII*. VII, (1), 46-64. Edición Especial, 2022 http://dx.doi.org/10.35381/r.k.v7i1.1678

Forsythe, E., & Raine, P. (2019). Bring the back-row students to the front of the class with Flipgrid. *Japan Association for Language Teaching Journal*, *43*(4), 22–24. Retrieved from https://jaltpublications. org/articles/25498-bring-back-row-students-frontclass-flipgrid on 20 March 2023.

Glava, A.; Arvanitis, P.; Panagiotis, P.; Georgios, Y. (2017). *Digital Storytelling in Language Education*. Master's Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki.

Goh, C. C. (2016). Teaching speaking. In W. A. Renandys & H. P. Widodo (Eds.) *English Language Teaching Today: Linking Theory and Practice* (pp. 143-159). Springer.

Goh, C., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Green, T., & Green, J. (2018). Flipgrid: Adding Voice and Video to Online Discussions. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, *62*(1), 128-130. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-017-0241-x

Hammett, D. A. (2021). Utilizing Flipgrid for speaking activities: A small-scale university-level EFL study. *Technology in Language Teaching & Learning*, 3(2), 34 - 50. doi:10.29140/tltl.v3n2.509

Huertas, C. A. (2021). Developing Speaking with 21st Century Digital Tools in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom: New Literacies and Oral Skills in Primary Education. *Aula Abierta,* 50(2), 625 - 634. doi:10.17811/rifie.50.2.2021.625-634

Idayani, A., & Sailun, B. (2017). Roles of Integrating Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Teaching Speaking at the First Semester of English Students of FKIP UIR. J-SHMIC: *Journal of English for Academic*, 4(2), 12-23.

Iona, J. (2017). Flipgrid. *School Librarian*, 65(4), 211–212.

Ismiati, P. S., Didi, S., & Pupung, P. (2022). Using Flipgrid as electronic portfolio in speaking assessment. *POLYGLOT, Journal Ilmiah*, 18(2), 187-202.

Keiper, M. C., White, A., Carlson, C. D., & Lupinek, J. M. (2021). Student perceptions on the benefits of Flipgrid in a HyFlex learning environment. *Journal of education for business*, 96(6), 343-351.

Kiles, T. M., Vishenchuk, J., & Hohmeier, K. C. (2020). Implementation of Flipgrid as a Self- Reflection Tool for Student Engagement–A Pilot Study. *Innovations in Pharmacy*, 11(4), 20-25.

Lim, J., Shin, K., & Yunus, M. (2021). The Attitudes of Pupils towards using Flipgrid in Learning English Speaking Skills. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 20(3), 151–168. doi:10.26803/ijlter.20.3.10

Lowenthal, P. R., & Moore, R. L. (2020). Exploring Student Perceptions of Flipgrid in Online Courses. *Online Learning*, 24(4), 28 - 42. doi:10.24059/olj.v24i4.2335

MacIsaac, D. (2020). Flipgrid. Com – An easy – to – use free classrooms student video site (website and smartphone app). *The Physics Teacher*, 270 - 286. doi:10.1119/1.5145485

McLain, T. (2018). Integration of the video response app Flipgrid in the business writing classroom. *International Journal of Education Technology and Learning*, 68 - 75. doi:10.20448/2003.42.68.75

Mango, O. (2021). Flipgrid: Students' Perceptions of its Advantages and Disadvantages in the Language Classroom. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 5(3), 277 - 287. doi:10.46328/ijtes.195

Meyer, K. A. (2014). Student Engagement in Online Learning: What Works and Why. *ASHE High. Edu. Rept.*, *40*, 1-114. doi:10.1002/aehe.20018

Mohamad Hsbollah, H. (2021). The Impact of Flipgrid in Students' Learning Experience at Higher Learning Institution. *World Journal of English Language*, 12(2), 249-256.

Nurhidayah, R. (2015). The Role of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition. *Journal Ilmiah STBA*, 6(2), 127 - 137. doi:10.47255/spectral.v6i2.59

Ohler, J.B. (2013). *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity*. Corwin Press: Southend Oaks, CA, USA.

Ounis, A. (2020). The Assessment of Speaking Skills at the Tertiary Level. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 7(4), 95 - 112. doi:10.5539/ijel.v7n4p95

Parveen, B. W. (2016). Use of Technology in Improving Speaking Skills. *JOELL: Journal Of English Language and Literature*, 3(2), 121-122.

Petersen, J., Townsend, S., & Onaka, N. (2020). Utilizing Flipgrid application on student smartphones in a small-scale ESL study. *English Language Teaching*, 13(5), 164–176. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n5p164

Rao, P. S. (2019). The importance of speaking skills in English classrooms. *Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal (ACIELJ)*, 2(2), 6-18.

Romaña Correa, Y. (2015). Skype conference calls: A way to promote speaking skills in the teaching and learning of English. *Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development*, 17(1), 143-156.

Saçak, B., & Kavun, N. (2020). Rethinking Flipgrid and VoiceThread in the context of online collaborative learning theory. In E. Alqurashi (Ed), *Handbook of research on fostering student engagement with instructional technology in higher education* (pp. 211–228). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-0119-1.ch012

Shah, R. K. (2019). Effective social constructivist approach to learning for social studies classroom. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 3(2), 1-14.

Simina, V.; Hamel, M.J. (2005). CASLA through a social constructivist perspective: WebQuest in project-driven language learning. *ReCALL*, 217–228.

Skylar, A. A. (2009). A comparison of asynchronous online text-based lectures and synchronous interactive web conferencing lectures. *Issues in Teacher education*, 18(2), 69–84.

Sosas, R. V. (2021). Technology in teaching speaking and its effects on students learning English. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 958 - 970. doi:10.52462/jlls.66

Syahrizal, T., & Pamungkas, M. Y. (2020). Revealing Students' Responds on the Use of Flipgrid in Speaking Class: Survey on ICT. *Acuity: Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature, and Culture*, 98 - 107. doi:10.35974/acuity.v6i2.2459

Taylor, C. & Shawver, S. (2020). Strategies for Using Flipgrid in the Kinesiology Classroom. *US-China Education Review A*, 10(5), 230-235. doi: 10.17265/2161-623X/2020.05.

Tello, S. F. (2008). An analysis of student persistence in online education. In C. Van Slyke (Ed), *Information communication technologies: Concepts, methodologies, tools, and applications* (pp. 1163- 1178). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Tuyet, T. T., & Khang, N. D. (2020). The Influences of the Flipgrid app on Vietnamese EFL High School Learners' Speaking Anxiety . *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 5(1), 128 - 130. doi:10.46827/ejlfl.v5i1.3264

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Yahya, Y., Yusrizal, Y., & Kurniawan, R. (2019). Technology in Teaching Speaking Skill: A Review of Current Literature. *Journal of Language Education Development*, 2(1), 243 - 244. doi:10.52060/jled.v2i1.204

Young, J. (2018). *Microsoft buys video-discussion platform Flipgrid - EdSurge News*. EdSurge. Retrieved from https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-06-18-microsoft-buys-videodiscussion-platform-flipgrid on 25 April 2023.