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Understanding EFL students' learning through classroom research: Experiences of teacher-researchers

Sandy T. Soto
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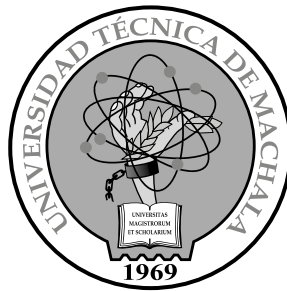
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Understanding EFL students' learning through classroom research: Experiences of teacher-researchers

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Dedication

To those EFL teachers who, day by day, give the best of their own
for helping their students construct their knowledge and learn
English in meaningful and effective ways.

Sandy T. Soto

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Introduction

What should foreign language teachers do to help their students improve their linguistic skills? Many are the ways how teachers can support their students' learning process. There are a variety of methods, strategies, techniques, as well as materials and resources we can rely on in order for our students to succeed in the development of their skills.

Teachers can get ideas on what to do from published research, presentations at academic events, informal conversations with colleagues, online resources, and their own language learning experience. It is just a matter trying these ideas out and evaluate the extent to which they favor the enhancement of students' linguistic competences in the target language.

In line with these ideas, this book is intended to inform pre-service and in-service EFL teachers about the result of investigations conducted by English as foreign language teachers. The book is composed of five chapters which demonstrate how these teachers have taken a step further by taking the role of teacher-researchers to understand and boost their students' performance.

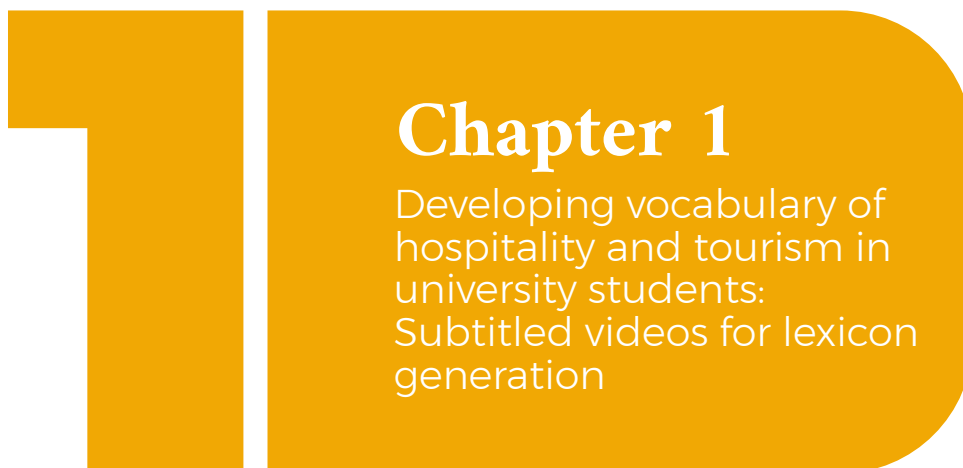
The first chapter of this book reports on a study conducted at the university level where students majoring in Hospitality and Tourism participated as principal users of videos to develop vocabulary of their field. The study aimed to find out the opinions of students about the use of English subtitled videos or movies to develop tourism vocabulary and to explore the benefits of using English subtitled videos in a context where there is no practice of the target language outside the classroom.

The second chapter of this book focuses on the development of listening skills through the use of podcasts as a strategy and resource in EFL classes. The aim of the study was to discuss the importance of podcasts for teaching English as a foreign language and to analyze the results of using them to improve listening comprehension in university students.

The third chapter digs into the writing skill. It is based on an interuniversity investigation in which the authors identified the most common errors made by EFL beginning level college students in their written discourse. The identification of these errors can guide EFL teachers to make methodological decisions to improve their students' writing performance.

The fourth chapter also addresses writing. In this case, this chapter discusses how a group of college students developed their writing skills through the writing of paragraphs and peer correction. Students wrote e-mails, blogs, reviews and posts and used rubrics to evaluate their performance with the help of their peers.

Finally, chapter seven examines the use of cell phone games within English classes. The chapter seeks to introduce these games as a valuable resource to encourage the practice of English through mobile phones in and out of the classroom. Concepts of mobile games and the reasons to use them in EFL classes are addressed. The chapter also provides some suggestions of game applications developed to support the learning of EFL.



Chapter 1

Developing vocabulary of
hospitality and tourism in
university students:
Subtitled videos for lexicon
generation

Developing vocabulary of hospitality and tourism in university students: Subtitled videos for lexicon generation

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Developing vocabulary of hospitality and tourism in university students: Subtitled videos for lexicon generation

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Abstract

The present study was conducted in an Ecuadorian state University, with students majoring in Hospitality and Tourism. One subject that students must take in this major is English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It is well noted that students do not have frequent opportunities to listen to English in professional contexts outside of class. Most of them have a low level of English proficiency since they are only required to pass two levels of English at any language institute. Consequently, this study aims to find the perceptions of students about the use of English subtitled videos or movies to develop tourism vocabulary and to explore the benefits of using these videos in a context where there is no practice of the target language outside the classroom. Furthermore, the study analyzes the aspects to be improved and other suggestions about using these types of videos. To reach this goal, 29 students participated in the study to answer an online survey with multiple-choice questions along with an open-ended question to explain why they chose a particular option. The results showed that most of the participants feel comfortable watching videos subtitled in English because they present the vocabulary as it is used in a real situation, they are related to their major, and they improve pronunciation. Even though some of them mentioned that videos make comprehension difficult, previous studies revealed effective ways to overcome this struggle. Finally, later studies are suggested to analyze speaking skills development through the use of subtitled videos or films.

Keywords: cognitive load theory, cognitive theory of multimedia learning, subtitled videos, authentic videos, English for specific purposes.

Introduction

It is observed that learners who are majoring in Hospitality and Tourism at the Ecuadorian university where the study was conducted have a deficient level of English proficiency. The reason why they present a poor English development is that they are only required to complete two levels of English at any language institute and they do not have opportunities to listen to the target language in professional contexts outside of class. Most students do not come from bilingual schools, so their English is limited. The authors of the study propose to increase students' occasions to listen to foreign language dialogues using videos with authentic or didactic purposes to familiarize learners with the words and expressions related to Hotel and Tourism situations.

The study, which is a systematic review, examines the cognitive load theory proposed by Sweller (2011), who analyzes human cognitive architecture to build

novel instructional procedures. According to this theory, knowledge is divided into biologically primary knowledge that humans develop to obtain biologically secondary knowledge.

Additionally, the chapter analyzes the Theory of Multimedia Learning promoted by Richard Mayer from two studies, Mayer (2012) and Mayer & Moreno (2002), which explain that Multimedia messages are designs based on how the human mind works to enhance meaningful learning and the function of animation in multimedia learning.

The authors investigated studies related to the use of subtitled videos in English to expand knowledge of words and expressions related to the students' field of study. One of the researches that were found related to technological sources for English development was written by Lin, Cantoni, and Murphy (2018) on the design of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) for tourism and hospitality. The authors indicated that the 18 MOOCs used videos instead of textbooks that became the primary teaching tool of MOOCs.

Another study was conducted by Kozhevnikova (2014), who considered the use of authentic videos that show what happens in a situation that is not ELT. Through authentic videos, students use the target language realistically in contexts that motivate them to acquire cultural knowledge.

Exposure to the target language through videos is fundamental when students are not exposed to it regularly. The main task of the teachers is to select cultural information and authentic material for an extensive collection of cultural and linguistic data. In this sense, students improve their intercultural communication (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

For the present study, the teacher who is also the primary author of the research used Internet videos subtitled in English related to Hospitality and Tourism topics. Some videos were didactic and others authentic. It is observed that a large number of participants in this study have a favorable opinion about the use of videos because they present the vocabulary as it is used in a real situation. Likewise, further studies on the development of speaking skills with the use of subtitled videos are necessary.

General Objective:

To find out the participants' perceptions regarding the use of subtitled videos in the target language to develop vocabulary related to Hospitality and Tourism.

Specific Objectives:

To identify the benefits of using English subtitled videos in a context where there is no practice of the target language outside the classroom.

To determine the aspects to be improved and other suggestions about using English subtitled videos to develop vocabulary related to hospitality and tourism.

For the literature review, the authors considered updated scientific articles from recognized databases ranked by the ScImago Journal. The topics that were regarded for the literature review are linked to the cognitive theory of multimedia learning, the cognitive load theory and the use of videos as a teaching resource to develop vocabulary.

Cognitive Load Theory

The Cognitive Load Theory, according to Sweller (2011), analyzes human cognitive architecture to build novel instructional procedures. According to this theory, knowledge is divided into biologically primary knowledge that humans develop to obtain biologically secondary knowledge. Secondary knowledge governs teaching. It is processed similarly to the way biological evolution treats knowledge. Secondary knowledge requires that human cognition uses a considerable information store, which is obtained from different information stores. New information is built by a random generate and test procedure containing a scarce volume of new information that can be processed at any time.

On the contrary, a significant volume of information in the information store can be processed to produce complex action. The resulting architecture produces instructional procedures. The cognitive load effect is the basis for cognitive load theory. However, they should not be considered independently. Human cognitive architecture and the categories of cognitive load need to be considered together. Instruction aims to increase knowledge contained in the long-term memory through the principle of the information store. This knowledge enables working memory to function effectively allowing humans to perform activities that under other conditions would be highly complex or unthinkable. For this reason, it is essential to consider human cognitive architecture when designing instruction (Sweller, 2011).

A different study conducted by Diao, Chandler, and Sweller (2007) based on cognitive load theory, analyzed the influence of simultaneously written presentations on English as a foreign language speaking. Three instructional formats were used to compare students' language comprehension: listening with auditory materials only, listening with a full, written script, and listening with simultaneous subtitled text. It was found that listening with a script resulted in improved understanding of the scripted and subtitled extract but lack of performance on auditory

passage than listening solely with the auditory materials. The results demonstrated that using scripts had negative influences on the development of listening comprehension schemas.

Even though students perform effectively with auditory and written representations of listening comprehension materials, it is unknown whether they have positively improved their listening comprehension schemas. The study also reveals that listening comprehension instructional procedures that combine simultaneous subtitles with auditory listening materials result in an excessive cognitive load that affects learning. On the other hand, showing listening comprehension material in auditory form only is possibly more productive in improving learners' listening comprehension. Written presentations did not influence positively Schema construction connected to listening comprehension and did not allow students to comprehend similar material without visual texts. On the other hand, including written material linked with spoken material enhances comprehension and information recall. In this respect, the findings confirm that when the purpose of a task is comprehension and recall, spoken and written text needs to be available (Diao, Chandler, and Sweller 2007).

A study regarding animation with subtitles, conducted by Ng, Kalyuga, and Sweller (2013) considers animation more advantageous than static graphics in the presentation of dynamic content since it facilitates a more accurate and authentic display. However, animated information is perceptually transient. The research which was a quasi-experimental study, applied the cognitive load theory to analyze the degree to which animation's transience could be improved using a pause/play feature that allows information to be visually available on the screen. The study used continuous animation, animation with pause/play, and their equivalent static graphics. Each animation was designed with either a trace or no trace, to teach 228 post-secondary technical education students about electrical circuit works. The results revealed that animation with a pause/play format proved to be the most efficient in the tracing condition.

The transient features result in previous information to disappear once new information appears. For new information to be associated with previous information, it is required to be processed along with previous information to be understood. For this purpose, students need to maintain active previous information in their minds for a long time while attempting to process the new information simultaneously until the two information can be linked and assimilated meaningfully. According to Peterson and Peterson findings (as cited in Diao, Chandler, and Sweller, 2007), this complex process overwhelms the working memory that can keep information for a few seconds. An overwhelmed working memory can lead students to miss previous information resulting in ineffective learning. Static graphic has little or inexistent transience issues since information are always available. This persistent information can be seen again and again, which enhance memory support and requires students less need to keep information in the working memory compared with the transient information elements connected with animation.

If previous information is essential for processing existing information, that information must be either kept in working memory or continue to be accessible during the presentation. For this reason, the animation is valid as long as transience is ameliorated. In the study, a learner controlled, pause/play mechanism, and a tracing mechanism is suggested to ameliorate animation transience (Ng, Kalyuga, and Sweller, 2013).

Theory of Multimedia Learning

Multimedia communication needs to be designed to promote multimedia learning processes. When Multimedia messages are structured based on how the human mind works, they are more likely to enhance meaningful learning (Mayer, 2012).

Another study conducted by Mayer and Moreno (2002) analyzes the function of animation in multimedia learning. The research also presents the cognitive theory of multimedia learning and seven principles for the use of animation in multimedia instruction, described in the following lines:

1. The multimedia principle shows animation and narration
2. Spatial contiguity principle presents on-screen text near from corresponding animation.
3. Temporal contiguity principle presents corresponding animation and narration simultaneously.
4. Coherence principle dismisses irrelevant terms, sounds and video.
5. Modality principle shows only animation and narration instead of animation and on-screen text.
6. Redundancy principle shows animation and narration instead of animation, narration, and on-screen text.
7. Personalization principle shows words in daily conversational styles. Animation enhances learner's comprehension when it is consistent with the cognitive theory of multimedia learning.

The narration gets into the ears for the learner to choose some of the terms to promote processing in the verbal channel, systematizes the words into a cause and effect chain, and combines it with the concrete material and experience. Animation gets into the eyes, for the learner to choose some of the images to enhance processing in the visual channel, systematizes the images into cause and effect chain, combines it with the verbal material and experience. This theory shows that the cognitive process takes place more efficiently when the student has an image and verbal portrayal in working memory simultaneously. As a result, instruction that fosters these processes leads to meaningful learning (Mayer and Moreno, 2002).

Subtitled videos or movies for vocabulary development

A study conducted by Bal-Gezegin (2014) showed that videos are one of the most frequently used tools and became extensively accessible as a teaching resource in the 1970s and 1980s. A video can be described according to Bal-Gezegin as carrying messages in an audio-visual environment. Besides being used as an aid for teaching a specific linguistic structure, it can also be the only material of a course in which students are asked to do recordings of them, to prepare different activities on the videos and to provide comments for these videos. This study shows that the use of video might lead to better vocabulary learning in classrooms than using audio material only.

Movies with subtitles have proved to be a useful source of listening comprehension. In this regard, Shamsaddini, Ghanbari, and Nematizadeh (2014) maintain that students who watch movies with subtitles do much better than the ones who watch movies without subtitles. Consequently, watching movies with subtitles are beneficial to develop listening comprehension.

The use of videos or movies to develop vocabulary

Language development through employing multimedia has innovated the process of learning a language. In the same vein, another study has centered on the benefits of English subtitled videos to develop learners' English as a Foreign Language (EFL) vocabulary. The participants of this study were given two types of instructions, one with instructional video episodes with subtitles and the other without subtitles. The findings showed that participants who watched the videos with subtitles obtained a higher mean score of vocabulary tests than those who watched the videos without subtitles. The outcomes show the effectiveness of subtitles on EFL learners for better vocabulary learning (Bava Harji, Woods, Alavi, 2010).

A broader perspective has been adopted by Lin, Cantoni & Murphy (2018) about the design of MOOCs courses for Tourism and Hospitality, which show that practices and research in tourism and hospitality MOOCs are still emerging. In this regard, the authors indicated that the 18 MOOCs used videos instead of textbooks, which became the MOOCs' primary educational tool. Furthermore, All MOOCs used English as the target language and videos with English subtitles to assist students in understanding video content. One of the focuses of the study is the significance of multilingual support, such as subtitles in the MOOCs course.

According to Trinder (2017), it is recommended that business students use online news sites and journals to develop ESP vocabulary. Specifically, television series, films, and videos are even more popular among these students.

Another study conducted by Buil-Beltrán (2018) aims to demonstrate an interlingual subtitling task in a class of ESP students to develop their listening and reading skills. The study explored the use of Task-Based Learning in ESP classes and proposed implementation in a university class of English for the degree of architecture. It discusses the benefits and influences of the learning and development of these skills.

The results of multiple studies have revealed that the use of subtitled videos is an essential passive and active tool that may help L2 students to develop better communication skills. The author combines Task-Based Learning (TBL) with a subtitling task in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) class (Buil-Beltrán, 2018). To determine the effects of videos in ESP classes, Violeta and Darja (2015) found out that most teachers realize the advantages of using video materials for the improvement of English skills. Specifically, they centered on the development of the productive skills of writing, speaking, and vocabulary improvement. These authors maintain that little research has been done on the use of authentic video in conventional and virtual language environments (VLEs).

Similarly, Naghizadeh & Darabi (2015) considered that since films interconnect the verbal and imagery systems, students based on dual coding theory can process and recall better because of image and translation effects.

In this respect, Suparmi, Cahyono & Latief (2017) analyzed the consequences of watching subtitled and un-subtitled videos to develop writing skills. It was found that the students who watched subtitled videos performed at a much higher level than those who viewed un-subtitled videos and those who did not see any video. Additionally, learners who watched un-subtitled videos performed better than those who did not view any video.

A different research carried out by Naghizadeh and Darabi (2015) reflected on the use of videos to build vocabulary in Iranian EFL students and the influence of bimodal, Persian, and no subtitle films on vocabulary learning among Iranian EFL learners. The participants for this study were randomly selected to three groups, namely: Bimodal group, Persian group, and no subtitle group. They were asked to watch a movie with three modes of subtitles: 1) Bimodal subtitle, 2) Persian subtitle and 3) no subtitle. They were all required to take a pre-test containing a new term from the movie. Later, a post-test was administered. The results from the tests showed that participants from the bimodal subtitling group learned new terms effectively. Participants in the Persian subtitling and no subtitle groups had comparable performance, but they were less effective than bimodal subtitling.

Bonsignori (2018) conducted another investigation related to the use of films and TV series to develop the target language, in which among the benefits, they include the exposition to English native speakers and the use of words in specific situations.

Furthermore, Giampieri (2018) maintains that movies are a source of teaching materials for foreign learners. Dialogues in movies are natural and authentic,

which is considered the pillar of L2 teaching. Viewing subtitled film help students observe and learn spoken language characteristics such as enjoying and being involved in the lesson and understanding the spoken language elements.

Authentic videos or movies with subtitles

Another topic acknowledged by Kozhevnikova (2014) is the use of authentic videos, which shows what happens in a non-ELT situation which is designed for entertainment rather than for language teaching. Through Authentic video, learners use the target language realistically in contexts that motivate them to gain cultural knowledge after watching videos from the target culture in the classroom.

The teachers' main task is to select cultural information and authentic material from an extensive collection of cultural and linguistic data. In this regard, students need to know the different meanings of words linked to the customs and traditions of people from the target culture to improve their intercultural communication (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

Films with subtitles boost learning the language faster. In this respect, a study explores the consequences of contextualizing vocabulary items in the form of subtitled situations and compares with teaching vocabulary without subtitles. When the students attempt to understand the written and spoken dialogues, the vocabulary items are used as the core component. The finding of this research demonstrated that this strategy influenced vocabulary learning positively (Heidari & Abbasnasab, 2016).

As vocabulary is concerned, Washang (2014) recognized that it is the basis for acquiring reading skills. Therefore, they need to focus on vocabulary aspects. The aim of this author's study is to propose subtitled videos for vocabulary acquisition and its influence on the level of word retention in ESP language students. The results of the study showed that a class that used texts and exercises with the addition of selected videos did better in a test than the one that was treated with only books and practices.

Videos are a great tool to enhance learners' pronunciation, stress, and intonation patterns, which can help students learn words more efficiently. Videos enable learners to use their background knowledge, which facilitates them to analyze the situation. Videos with scripts make learners better listeners, participants, and intelligent guessers of the missed words (Washang, 2014).

Working with videos to develop the target language in EFL students through different activities leads to combining technology in a TBL environment. As a consequence of the positive aspects of using videos, another study conducted by Tsai (2014) integrates a course related to international trade fairs into ESP instruction at a technical university in Taiwan. It also combines an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) approach with TBL. Besides providing authentic ma-

materials for ESP in real-life situations, the courseware offered activities with quick self-evaluation. The findings revealed that students enrolled in the courseware had the same or better progress than those choosing the teacher-centered instruction while completing the tasks of problem-solving and higher-order thinking.

Additionally, films are also used to teach a foreign language because it motivates learners and decreases fear. Films facilitate instructors to teach using real-life situations from movies. Respect to this, students can be involved in discussions in which they combine their own experiences based on movie content (Naghizadeh & Darabi, 2015).

According to Ismaili (2013) because of the different technological resources, traditional ways of learning do not motivate students. As a consequence, teachers look for more motivating teaching sources. On the contrary, textbooks and CDs are unauthentic teaching sources that do not engage students. The use of movies makes the classroom more fun for learners. The study findings concluded that videos call students 'attention and present language authentically. Furthermore, "since movies show real-life situations, watching them may be interesting for teaching listening comprehension and help motivate students to study in the English language" (Safran, 2014, p. 170).

Regarding the development of English abilities, Tuncay (2014) maintains that movies are beneficial for the following aspects:

- Develop language competence;
- Understand authentic language and culture;
- Increase fluency and writing abilities;
- Practice English for different situations;
- Acquire new terms and genuine expressions;
- Differentiate between artificial and natural use of language,
- Ability to use language in social interactions.

Frumuselua, De Maeyer, Donche, and Gutiérrez (2015) findings reveal that the use of subtitled videos in a foreign language classroom is beneficial for the development of new terms and expressions. The study explored everyday conversations through the use of subtitled TV series. For this purpose, 40 Spanish/Catalan, Dutch, German, Russian, Romanian and Moldavian university students were assigned randomly either to interlingual mode (English sound + Spanish subtitles) or to intralingual mode (English sound + English subtitles). They were exposed to 13 subtitled episodes from the series 'Friends' during seven weeks. A multiple-choice and open-ended questions pre-test and a post-test were applied to analyze the outcome of the two kinds of subtitles. The results showed that students performed better under the EE (intralingual) than under the ES (interlingual) mode. The experiment in this study had led participants to be involved in the learning process through subtitled videos by encouraging them to watch the videos habitually outside the classroom.

The results of another study conducted by Vulchanova, Aurstad, Kvitness, and Es-huis (2015) revealed that the presence of subtitles improves learners' comprehension of the plot and content of the movie. In this study, the age range of the participants was 49 17-year-old students and 65 16-year-old students who were native speakers of Norwegian, learning English in high school. Both groups were divided into three Conditions, one group watched an episode of an American cartoon with Norwegian subtitles, one group with English subtitles, and one group watched the episode with no subtitles. Immediately after watching the episode, both groups of students responded to a comprehension questionnaire that reflected positive short-term effects of both native language (L1) and target language (L2). Four weeks later, the students responded to a word definition and a word recall activity to search potential long-term impacts of the subtitles. It was found that native language subtitles influenced negatively on performance on the comprehension activity.

Another study investigated how video caption type influenced vocabulary learning and listening comprehension of low-intermediate Chinese learners of English. Each video was presented two times with one of the five caption types: (1) no caption (NC), (2) full caption with no audio (FCNA), (3) full caption (FC), (4) full caption with highlighted target-word (FCHTW), and (5) full caption with highlighted target-word and L1 gloss (FCL1). The results revealed that full caption with highlighted target-word and L1 gloss (FCL1) improved vocabulary learning since promotes consideration to formal and semantic characteristics of a word and strengthen form-meaning links (Hsieh, 2019).

Under the same perspective, a different study supported the use of subtitles since the learners were of a lower-intermediate level and were considerably frustrated "by the quick delivery rate of the speakers on the news broadcast videos, especially since they could only hear them once" (p. 368). For this reason, learners strongly preferred subtitles to overcome the lack of comprehension.

Ways and tools that facilitate developing vocabulary through subtitle videos or movies

To learn vocabulary from subtitled films, students must watch them quite frequently. In this regard, subtitled movies are useful in vocabulary development if learners watch films repeatedly. Viewing the video, again and again, enable students to learn new terms, expressions, and idioms (Etemadi, 2012).

A recent study investigated the influence of the number of two- and three-line subtitles "on the cognitive processing, comprehension, enjoyment, and preferences of viewers with different linguistic backgrounds" (Szarkowska & Gerber-Morón, 2019, p. 158). In this study, we showed participants one video with two-line subtitles and one with three-line subtitles. We measured the impact of the number of lines on subtitle processing using eye-tracking as well as comprehension, cognitive

load, enjoyment, and preferences. We conducted two experiments with different types of viewers: hearing native speakers of English, Polish and Spanish as well as British hard of hearing and deaf viewers. Three-line subtitles induced a higher cognitive load than two-line subtitles. The number of lines did not affect comprehension. Viewers generally preferred two-line over three-line subtitles. The results provide empirical evidence on the processing of two- and three-line subtitles and can be used to inform current subtitling practices. A significant finding of this study is that three-line subtitles caused in higher cognitive capacity than two-line subtitles, according to self-report and the longer time spent in the subtitle area. It was also found that Cognitive effort was higher in the three-line subtitles videos regardless of the participants' linguistic background (Szarkowska & Gerber-Morón, 2019). A significant study related to vocabulary development was conducted by Culbertson, Shen, and Andersen (2017), in which an assessment with 27 participants, demonstrated that participants used the voice-driven system more often than a comparison text-based system. Additionally, in a field study of 130 learners, it was demonstrated the potential for community-driven resource collection. They maintain that authentic foreign language videos are beneficial "to meanings expressed by the tone and word choice, and the ability to effectively express these meanings" (p.1431). Videos allow students to learn the language in different situations; however, learning a foreign language with videos is very complicated. The option is the design of tools that will allow students to be more involved in learning from video sources. The findings show that the use of voice is a natural and effective way for learners to engage with videos, and repeating words and phrases from videos can cause learners to engage more with text-based video activities (Culbertson, Shen, Jung, and Andersen, 2017, p.1439).

The literature review of the present study starts by analyzing the cognitive load theory proposed by Sweller (2011), which focuses on the human cognitive architecture to build novel instructional procedures. This section also examines the Theory of Multimedia Learning promoted by Richard Mayer, who maintains that multimedia messages are designed based on how the human mind works and the function of animation in multimedia learning to boost meaningful learning.

After the examination of these two theories, the researchers considered relevant to revised previous studies connected to the use of subtitled videos in English to develop knowledge of terms and phrases related to the students' field of study (Cantoni & Murphy, 2018; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Trinder, 2017; Violeta & Darja, 2015) among others. Most of the previous researches for the present study were associated with the principles of the cognitive theory of multimedia learning and the theory of cognitive load.

The revised studies were conducted in universities from the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, where international students take ESP courses. The studies analyzed the influence of English subtitled videos or films, in various

forms, for the development of English language skills. Some of the articles followed a quasi-experimental or experimental research design.

Research regarding the use of videos to develop vocabulary is scarce in the state university where the study was conducted. For this reason, the investigation fills a scientific gap for the learning of new terms associated with the learners' field of study in contexts where the target language is not available outside class.

Methodology

Sample

There were 29 participants (20 women and nine men) from an Ecuadorian state university majoring in Hotel and Tourism Management; their age ranged from 22 to 24 years old. The 29 participants volunteered to take part in this research work. To participate in the study learners had to be officially registered as students in the public university where the study was conducted in 2018, to be present regularly in class, and to be willing to participate in the research. Before conducting the research, students were informed about the present project and signed a Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study.

The present research is an exploratory one, and the data gathering is qualitative to learn about the perception of learners regarding the use of subtitled videos.

Students participating in this research have watched English subtitled videos for one semester. After watching the videos, students were required to participate in role-plays using the phrases and expressions learned from the textbooks and the videos.

Instruments

The researchers used an electronic survey to identify learners' perceptions of the use of videos related to the tourism sector to develop vocabulary. The researchers designed this instrument ad hoc since participants have little previous experience using this strategy, and the researchers wanted to know what their points of view were. The survey included seven multiple-choice, closed-ended questions, and one open-ended question for each multiple-choice question. The questions were designed to learn about the participants' opinions on the use of videos. To check the content validity of the instruments, they were given to two research professors from the state university. Based on the experts' observations, the authors made improvement on the instruments. The survey was applied through a Google Apps Form.

To examine the results, the authors used both: a descriptive statistical analysis of the Likert scale questions, and the discourse analysis to examine participants' answers given in the open-ended question. It is worth mentioning that not all 29

students participating in the present study answered the open questions. The number of students who responded to the open-ended question in each item is shown in the following table:

Table 1: Students who responded to the open-ended questions

| Number of Items | Statement | Number of responses |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | I like to watch English videos with English subtitles. | 18 |
| 2 | I feel frustrated when watching English videos. | 17 |
| 3 | Observing English videos with English subtitles motivates me to learn the language for my future profession. | 15 |
| 4 | In my opinion, watching English videos with English subtitles facilitates to learn vocabulary and expressions related to the career | 18 |
| 5 | English videos with English subtitles have helped me to communicate in the target language | 17 |
| 6 | The English videos increase my vocabulary knowledge that I need for my professional life | 16 |
| 7 | The videos presented vocabulary as it is used in a real context | 13 |

The researchers used the Odd Likert scale to give the respondents the choice of answering neutrally. In this respect, for the present study, it was used the 5-Point Likert Scale that includes five answer options so that participants can select a neutral answer option instead of the extreme choices. The discourse analysis to examine the answers of the open-ended question centers on the way language was used in a social situation (Salkind, 2010).

Results

Table 2: Perceptions of students regarding the use of subtitled videos for developing vocabulary in ESP classes (Multiple-Choice Questions)

| Items | Very agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Disagree | |
|---|------------|------|-------|------|---------|------|----------|------|----------|-----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. I like watching subtitled videos. | 10 | 34,5 | 14 | 48,3 | 4 | 13,8 | 1 | 3,4 | | |
| 2. I am frustrated when I watch English videos. | 4 | 13,8 | 7 | 24,1 | 5 | 17,2 | 11 | 37,9 | 2 | 6,9 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|------|----|------|---|------|---|-----|--|--|
| 3. Subtitled videos encourage me to learn the language for my profession. | 13 | 46,4 | 13 | 46,4 | 3 | 7,1 | | | | |
| 4. Subtitled videos make it more accessible to learn vocabulary and expressions related to my major. | 13 | 48,8 | 16 | 55,2 | | | | | | |
| 5. Subtitled videos have helped me to communicate in the target language. | 8 | 27,6 | 13 | 48,8 | 6 | 20,7 | 2 | 6,9 | | |
| 6. Subtitled videos increase my vocabulary knowledge that I need for my profession. | 11 | 37,9 | 18 | 62,1 | | | | | | |
| 7. The videos present the vocabulary authentically. | 6 | 20,7 | 18 | 62,1 | 3 | 10,3 | 2 | 6,9 | | |

The analysis of the data obtained from the students' answers of the open-ended questions resulted in three categories: positive aspects with six codes, aspects to be improved with three codes, and other considerations with two codes. It is worth mentioning that not all 29 participants answered the open-ended questions.

Table 3: Perceptions of students about the use of subtitled videos to develop vocabulary related to tourism (open-ended questions)

| Category | 1. Positive Aspects | Times mentioned | 2. Aspects to be improved | Times mentioned | 3. Other Considerations | Times mentioned |
|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| Codes | Better comprehension | 4 | Dislike watching subtitled videos | 3 | They are useful as long as they relate to tourism. | 3 |
| | Learn new words | 16 | Difficult to comprehend | 6 | English videos are not watched often. | 4 |
| | Improve pronunciation | 22 | It does not motivate | 2 | | |
| | Videos related to the field of study | 4 | | | | |
| | Learn how words are written | 4 | | | | |
| | Resemble real-life situation | 5 | | | | |

Discussion

Regarding the results obtained from the multiple-choice close-ended questions (Table 2) applied to 29 participants from a state university, we observe the following outcomes:

Concerning the first item I like to observe English videos with English subtitles, most participants agreed with the statement, and only a minority disagreed. English videos with subtitles have not been often used in the state university where the study was conducted.

Consequently, this strategy deals with technological innovation that encourages learners to develop the language. In this respect, the study of Bava Harji, Woods, and Alvi (2010) demonstrated that subtitled videos are useful for developing vocabulary learning since they combine images, sound, and texts.

For the second item, I feel frustrated when I observe English videos, most students disagreed with this statement since they experience that through this strategy, they develop the target language gradually. Accordingly, the cognitive load theory is divided into biologically primary knowledge that humans develop to obtain biologically secondary knowledge. Secondary knowledge requires that human cognition uses a considerable information store, which is obtained from different information stores (Sweller, 2011). The principle of the cognitive load theory allows students to learn complex information gradually. Besides, Naghizadeh & Darabi (2015) considered that English subtitled videos help learners to keep information in their minds and apply them easier later.

For the third item, Observing English videos with English subtitles encourage me to learn the language for my future profession, most participants agreed with this statement and only very few disagreed. The involvement of the target language outside the class is quite limited, so learners need to listen to the videos often to learn expressions and terms used in the tourism sector. In this regard, a study conducted by Violeta and Darja (2015) reveals that the majority of ESP teachers see the effectiveness of using video for the development of English skills. Similarly, another study conducted by Buil-Beltrán (2018) demonstrates that subtitling tasks in ESP classes help students to develop their listening and reading skills. Additionally, the author maintains that subtitle videos enhance ESP students to improve the comprehension of documents and dialogues for their future professions. Incorporating written material connected with spoken material improves comprehension and information recall. When the aim of the activity is comprehension and recall, spoken and written text needs to be available (Diao, Chandler, and Sweller 2007).

The responses for the fourth item, in my opinion observing videos in English with subtitles, make more natural to learn vocabulary and expressions related to my career, reveal that most participants agreed with the statement. The exit profile of student majoring in Hotel and Tourism at this state university requires students to be able to communicate in a foreign language. In this case, learners need to be able

to function effectively using the target language in a tourism context. Concerning this item, a study conducted by Washang (2014) indicates that subtitle videos enhance reading skills, which also develops vocabulary. The aim of videos, according to this author, is to improve vocabulary acquisition in ESP language students.

Concerning the fifth item, English videos with English subtitles have helped me to communicate in the foreign language, most participants agreed, and only a minority disagreed. Many students have not had the opportunity to travel abroad or do not often listen to English music or videos; consequently, they do not have experience with the target language. In this respect, a study conducted by Kozhevnikova (2014) considers that the experience of English outside the classroom is essential when the opportunity to be exposed to the target language is little. For this reason, the role of the teacher is to choose cultural information and authentic material for learners to improve their intercultural communication. Moreover, the use of subtitled videos, help L2 students to improve their communication skills by combining Task-Based Learning (TBL) with a subtitling task in an ESP class.

Most participants agreed with the sixth item that states, the English videos increase my vocabulary knowledge that I need for my professional life. The teacher at this university presents to learners the vocabulary related to a tourism topic from the textbook, and then show them the real context in which they are used through watching a video. In this regard, according to Suparmi, Cahyono & Latief (2017), subtitle videos enable students to hear English authentically and to observe the spelling of English words. Thus, a study conducted by Bal-Gezegin (2014) reveals that the use of videos develops the learning of vocabulary instead of using only printed or audio material.

Finally, with regards to the last item that states, the videos present the vocabulary as they are used in a real situation, the majority of the students agreed with this affirmation since not only they are learning the vocabulary from didactic purpose resources, but also authentic means. About this last statement, Kozhevnikova (2014) maintains that authentic videos demonstrate what happens in a non-ELT situation. In this way, authentic videos show learners how to use the target language authentically.

According to the results obtained from the open-ended questions (Table 3), it is worth mentioning that not all the 29 participants answered these questions; however, the author considered some of the answers as particularly significant for the present study. In this regard, from these answers, three categories were originated. These categories correspond to positive aspects, aspects to be improved, and other considerations. The following lines discuss the most critical codes generated from each category.

Within the positive aspects, most participants considered that the use of subtitle videos enhance the learning of new words. In this respect, the narration gets into the ears for the learner to choose some of the terms to promote processing in the verbal channel, organizes the words into a cause and effect chain, and associates it

with the concrete material and experience. Animation gets into the eyes, for the learner to choose some of the images to improve processing in the visual channel, arranges the images into cause and effect chain, associates it with the verbal material and experience. The cognitive theory of multimedia learning demonstrates that the cognitive process takes place more efficiently when the student has an image and verbal depiction in working memory at the same time. As a result, instruction that promotes these processes leads to meaningful learning (Mayer and Moreno, 2002).

Nowadays, most teachers from this university use only textbooks or printed material to teach students new terms, making the learning process meaningless and mechanical. The results of a study conducted by Bava Harji, Woods, Alavi (2010) demonstrated that students who watched subtitled videos did better in vocabulary tests than the ones who watched the videos without subtitles. Another study considers subtitled videos as a useful technique to develop vocabulary in Iranian EFL students. The participants were divided into three groups: Bimodal, Persian, and no subtitle. The outcomes show that learners from the bimodal subtitling group increased the learning of new terms. Participants in the Persian subtitling and no subtitle groups were less active than bimodal subtitling (Naghizadeh & Darabi, 2015).

Another positive aspect that participants mentioned the most about the use of subtitle videos is the improvement of pronunciation. In this regard, most teachers from this university are not native speakers of English, so English subtitle videos are a good mean for students to listen to the real pronunciation of native speakers. Videos are a valid resource to develop pronunciation (Washang, 2014). Similarly, through subtitled videos, learners listen to foreign language authentically and learn the pronunciation of words as well as their meaning (Suparmi, Cahyono & Latief, 2017).

Within the aspects to be improved, six learners mentioned that subtitled videos make comprehension difficult. For this reason, previous information is significant for processing current information. This information must be kept either in working memory or continue to be accessible during the presentation. The animation is valid as long as transience is ameliorated. A learner controlled, pause/play mechanism, and a tracing mechanism is proposed to ameliorate animation transience (Ng, Kalyuga, and Sweller, 2013).

Another way to improve the comprehension of subtitle videos is by watching them repeatedly to learn the meaning of words and expressions (Etemadi, 2012). Reading three-line subtitles is a different technique to enable comprehension of subtitled videos since it has been found that they produce a higher cognitive capacity of learning new terms (Szarkowska & Gerber-Morón, 2019). A tool that enhances comprehension of this type of videos is the use of voice which engages learners with videos naturally and effectively. According to the participants of a study, a voice enables learners to learn the correct pronunciation of words and the situations in which the phrases are used (Culbertson, Shen, Jung, and Andersen,

2017). Technological innovation to develop the foreign language poses a significant advanced that will enhance learner's comprehension in the long run especially if they had not had, in the majority of cases, the chances to be involved with the language authentically.

Regarding the aspect of other considerations, four students commented that English videos are not watched often. Consequently, learners should be exposed to the target language frequently if they do not have the opportunity to be involved with it regularly. The focus of instructors, in this respect, is to choose cultural information and authentic material to improve their intercultural communication (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

Another comment within other considerations is that 3 participants perceived that subtitled videos are valid if they relate to tourism. This perception implies that learners feel encouraged to learn a language when it appeals to their interests. Following this opinion, Kozhevnikova (2014) acknowledges the significance of authentic videos to show a situation that is not ELT. Through Authentic videos, learners use the target language in contexts that encourage them to increase cultural knowledge (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

Conclusion

The present study was an exploratory research that employed a qualitative method of study and a systematic literature review that determined two aspects. The first aspect is related to the benefits of using subtitled English videos in a context where there is no practice of the target language outside the classroom.

In this regard, within the category of other considerations generated from the open-ended questions, participants mentioned that English subtitled videos are valid as long as they relate to tourism. For this reason, Kozhevnikova (2014) contemplated that English subtitled videos are beneficial when there is little opportunity to be exposed to the target language outside the classroom. In this respect, the use of subtitle videos helps students in a non-ELT situation improve their communication skills by joining TBL with a subtitling task in an ESP class.

Concerning the close-ended multiple-choice questions, it is observed that for the third item that refers to Observing English videos with English subtitles encourage me to learn the language for my future profession, most participants agreed with this option. The cognitive theory of cognitive multimedia learning demonstrates that the cognitive process takes place more efficiently when the student has an image and verbal portrayal in working memory simultaneously. As a result, instruction that promotes these processes results in meaningful learning (Mayer and Moreno, 2002).

Accordingly, Violeta and Darja (2015) maintain that most of ESP teachers perceived the benefits of using subtitled video to improve English skills. Respecti-

vely, Buil-Beltrán (2018) acknowledged that subtitling tasks in ESP classes help students to develop their listening and reading skills. The author also considers that English subtitled videos improve ESP students to develop the comprehension of documents and dialogues for their future professions.

Another factor connected with the first aspect that was analyzed in the present study was that numerous participants perceived that subtitled videos improve pronunciation in a context where there is little opportunity to practice the target language. The findings of Washang (2014) maintain that videos are a practical resource to improve learners' pronunciation. Likewise, subtitled videos allow learners to listen to foreign language authentically and learn the pronunciation and meaning of words (Suparmi, Cahyono & Latief, 2017).

The effectiveness of using subtitled videos to increase vocabulary was also observed in the majority of participants who agreed with the fourth item, in my opinion observing videos in English with English subtitles make more accessible to learn vocabulary and expressions related to my career. Similarly, most participants agreed with the sixth item that states, English videos increase my vocabulary knowledge that I need for my professional life. In this regard, according to Suparmi, Cahyono & Latief (2017), subtitled videos enable students to listen to English authentically and to observe the spelling of English words. Thus, a study conducted by Bal-Gezegin (2014) reveals that the use of videos develops the learning of vocabulary instead of using only audio material.

In connection to the aspects to be improved from using subtitled videos, we observed that most participants mentioned in the open-ended questions that they make comprehension difficult. However, using a pause/play feature to allow information to be visually available on-screen (Ng, Kalyuga, and Sweller, 2013); watching subtitled videos repeatedly (Etemadi, 2012); reading three-line subtitles (Szarkowska & Gerber-Morón, 2019); and using voice (Culbertson, Shen, Jung, and Andersen, 2017) are recommended ways to develop comprehension.

Finally, another perception in connection to the second aspect analyzed in this study regarding other considerations from the use of subtitled videos; we observed that in the open-ended questions most participants commented that they are useful if they relate to tourism. In like manner, for the third item of the closed-ended question, most participants agreed with the statement Observing English videos with English subtitles encourage me to learn the language for my future profession. To support these perceptions, a study conducted by Buil-Beltrán (2018) reveals that subtitle videos enable ESP students to improve the comprehension of documents and dialogues for their future professions.

Another consideration that students mentioned in the open-ended question is that English videos are not often watched. In this respect, teachers should concentrate on choosing cultural information and authentic material to develop their intercultural communication (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

To conclude, the findings of this study demonstrated that most of the students are in favor of watching English subtitled videos because they present the vocabulary authentically, improve pronunciation, and learn new words. Even though some mentioned that they make comprehension difficult, previous studies revealed effective ways to improve it. The present study dealt with a topic not explored enough by the professors at the state university where the research was conducted, and it fulfilled a research gap to innovate ways to teach vocabulary in ESP students. Further research is recommended to analyze speaking skills development through tasks that follow the principles of cognitive load and multimedia learning theories.

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2

Chapter 2

Implications of the use of
podcast in the
development of listening
skills at a university level

Implications of the use of podcast in the development of listening skills at a university level

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Implications of the use of podcast in the development of listening skills at a university level

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Abstract

A second or foreign language acquisition is a process in which learners develop and enhance different skills such as listening. However, students still struggle to comprehend L2. For instance, when a trainee works on a language proficiency, English listening material such as audios/videos and different pronunciations or sounds is difficult to analyze. Therefore, researchers have been investigating about techniques that work in classes and they found out that podcasting is increasingly being exploited by language teachers as a new popular and dynamic method to inspire learning inside and outside the traditional classroom (Stanley, 2006). This paper deals with student's listening difficulties, podcasts' technique and suggestions to be implemented in other settings. The aim is to analyze the mentioned technique in English teaching as a foreign language. Data were collected from pre and post questionnaires as well as interviews to understand better how the podcast-based practice influences university students' way of learning. The subjects were 59 students enrolled in a second-level English language course at the Universidad Politécnica de Chimborazo – Campus Morona Santiago during the academic term September 2018 – February 2019. Students have been listening to different podcasts during six weeks, reinforced by varied activities proposed by the researchers. Likewise, 30 of the participants, majoring in Zootechnics, had to train watching videos with English subtitles; instead, 29 students from Accounting and Auditing listened to the podcasts, while reading the transcripts. The results demonstrated that podcast usage has some implication in English language acquisition.

Keywords: podcast, SLA, listening comprehension, motivation

Introduction

Teaching a second language has been transformed in relation to the technological developments of information and communication (ICT). The use of technological tools through didactic strategies optimizes the learning processes by converting them into meaningful processes of good quality, evidencing effective results at the listening level within the student population.

It is surprising that listening skill, which is most often used in communication, has been shifted to a secondary position after speaking and writing. Yet, in spite of its critical role in language acquisition, it is accepted that listening skills have to be taught like any other language skills.

Due to the high technology developments, the activities and the way of learning in the classroom become an innovative approach of interaction and communication of contents. Nowadays, teaching is not only considered a traditional way of lear-

ning; but it is also a more active and interactive strategy that includes applications or digital programs, which are used to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge.

Podcasting is one of the greatest technology developments that has emerged and has the possibility to transform learning into a new approach to educate better and enhance learning. Furthermore, it contributes to the integration of digital skills and at the same time all the other language learning skills (Brittain, Gllowacki, van Ittersum & Johnson, 2006). Podcasting is a portmanteau word, formed by combining “iPod” developed by Apple and “broadcasting”, the traditional means of receiving information and leisure content on the radio or television. The term ‘podcast’ was first coined in 2004, and it means the publishing of audio or video via the Internet, which are designed to be downloaded and listened to on a portable device of any type.

Listening to audio is nothing new or innovative to the Web. Podcasting differs from other ways of delivering audio online by the idea of automatically downloaded content.

Podcasting offers language teachers and students a wide range of possibilities for extra listening practice both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, podcasts enable students to practice listening in a self-directed manner and at their own pace. By 2005, the concept of ‘podcasting’ reached its top point: thousands of podcasts were created, and The New Oxford American Dictionary named a ‘podcast’ its official ‘Word of the Year’.

The main purpose of this research work is to analyze the use of podcast as a strategy to encourage the development of listening comprehension in English at the Universidad Politécnica de Chimborazo- Sede Morona Santiago (Second Level A2/B1, students from different specializations) and how the same strategy can be used to develop activities assigned by the teacher and at the same time encourage self-study at home. Other aims no less important than the main one are to examine the challenges that students face in listening to various authentic English podcasts, and analyze learners’ self-assessment data on various ways of improving listening skills.

As a methodology of work, class observation will play a fundamental role in allowing students to qualify their reactions when developing various activities related to the podcast and students’ reflections on their experience of listening activities posted in a survey of students’ self-evaluation of their listening comprehension using podcast.

The intended outcome of research is to formulate the tips for good practice in improving learners’ listening skills.

Surveys contribute to the determination of how the podcast turned out to be more significant in the enhancement of it as a listening comprehension innovative strategy.

The development of digital competence should not only be directed to the development of linguistic intelligence, but it can also be effective in other areas of

knowledge, creating bases and tools for the integral formation of the individual, so the student can use the class contents, adapt them appropriately and strategically in a digital context under the recourse of the podcast.

Literature review

Teaching and tools

Listening consists of choosing necessary information, remembering it, and connecting it to the process between sound and form of meaning (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). In this sense, Rost (1994) told that listening is an active mental ability. It helps us to understand the world around us and is one of the necessary parts in making successful communication (Pourhosein, Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). On the other hand, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) stated that listening includes listening for thoughts, feelings, and intentions and this needs active involvement, effort, and practice. According to Morley (2001), throughout the 1990s, attention to listening in language instruction increased dramatically. Listening comprehension is now considered as an active skill that involves many processes. In order to understand clearly a conversation and spoken language, students need to connect instantaneously information listened, so that is why it makes listening “complex, dynamic, and fragile” (Celce-Murcia, 1995, p. 366). This is what we call “listening comprehension”, that is a sequence of different processes of understanding the spoken language. These include knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). According to Hamouda (2013), listening comprehension refers to the understanding of what the listener has heard and it is his/her ability to repeat the sounds without real comprehension. O’Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989) said that listening comprehension is an active process in which the listener figure out the meaning of the message starting from the context and existing knowledge, in order to be able to do the required task.

Students should participate in their own learning as much as possible, which is the most important feature that makes learning effective. The traditional idea of the passive teaching method such as listen and repeat, listen and memorize, listen and imitate, has given a new way of learning that motivate students to learn a second language (Pinker, 1994). Foreign language acquisition is a skill acquired with practice; therefore, key factors are motivation and innovative strategies. Podcast is the answer because meets the criteria for effective language learning in a number of ways.

Podcast definition, background and usage.

The term podcast first appeared in a newspaper article from The Guardian from 2004 (Hammersley, 2004). Nowadays, we refer to varied recorded audios or videos, posted regularly online and accessible to a wide range of audience. Rozema (2007) describes a podcast as “a blog in audio form” (31). There are many sources of sound on the Internet; but, not all audios are podcasts and not all podcasts are simply audios.

Although audio programs have existed on the Web for a few years already, podcasts were originally audio files uploaded to the internet, but an important feature makes them unique, which is the possibility of “subscription”. Through an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed, listeners can subscribe to their favorite podcast and can be alerted when new episodes have been posted and are available to be downloaded onto a computer or transferred to a mobile device, such as an MP3 player or mobile phone. (Mancini, 2006).

A podcast can also include videos or pictures, and listeners have the possibility to comment on the ones which are stored on the web; this is what it is called “show notes”.

Podcasts topics can be varied and used for any purpose, stories can be shared and commented on recent events, inform listeners about a topic, and as a result, they are valuable tools for teaching students to use spoken language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes. (Solano, 2013). The idea of using podcasts as an educational tool dates back to the year 2004, when a North Carolina University decided to experiment and distributed 20 iPods to students to use them in their courses for podcasting. It was a success, the following semester, the number of courses using podcasts had increased, especially in foreign language and music ones. Three years later, video podcasting was a reality and was being introduced at universities across the United States so that researchers could focus their attention on this new learning strategy.

With reference to foreign language teaching, recently, it has been preferable using authentic materials, instead of prepared and intentionally arranged for EFL classroom activities. Generally, that means involving materials based on native speaker contexts and communication, or rather those where Standard English is the norm, such as newspaper or magazine articles, advertisements, cooking recipes, horoscopes, etc. Most of the teachers worldwide agree that authentic materials are beneficial to the language learning process, but it is not already clarified and accepted how to use it in an EFL classroom.

It is known that podcasts cover a wide range of topics, which are developed or represented throughout varied ways, such as improvisation, with a script prepared or a recorded talk, with music, comments or sound effects (Solano, 2013).

Teachers can now make use of podcasting throughout varied strategies and use it as a digital tool that guides learning by promoting cognitive skills and producing

knowledge from reality (Vygotsky, 1978). From the above, this research project aims to improve the learning of listening in English, under self-evaluation work and communication through the podcast. Prado (2002) stated that technology is very important within the processes of teaching and language learning, as it also connects all participants in the educational process: teacher, student, context, objectives, contents and methodology. For this reason, it's a fortune and essential that technology has overcome the traditional way of teaching and learning in the way it stimulates students' intelligence by making use of pedagogical tools that until now have not been implemented. On the other hand, students need to get trained in digital competences so that they can be independent in learning by using podcasts (Adell, 2013). These aspects can be seen first-hand in academic activities carried out, in the development group within the class and also individually.

The idea of podcast-based teaching grew out of teaching practice; researchers have focused on their attention to understanding the approach to take advantage of hi-tech tools in learning, especially a second language and there are many theories that can support the use of podcasting (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007). This kind of strategy is based on student-centered approach and it is justified oriented to the constructivism and in particular to the work of Piaget and Vygotsky – see e.g. Bishop and Verleger (2013).

The theory is based on the main idea that students can construct their own knowledge structures through interaction with technology, in this case podcasts. Mathiasen (2010) and Jahnke (2015) are researchers that had the idea of “digital didactics”. A consequence of this view is that the student and the digital teaching environment are separated and there is no transfer of knowledge between them. Constructivism perspective tells us that knowledge is not an object that the teacher transfers to the learner, but it is built by learner's process of language acquaintance throughout teacher's assignments. As a result, the more stimulating the teaching/learning environment is, the easier will be for students to learn. Finally, podcasting also shares characteristics with the more recent notion of mobile learning (Kukulska-Hulme, 2005); which is considered as a nomadic way of learning, as it does not always take place in a fixed location.

Advantages of podcasting in education

At first glance, there appear to be numerous advantages of podcasting information to students in the academic environment, as it is also considered the latest trend. More schools are opting to use podcasting in their classroom as it stimulates learning through creativity and open lines of communication. Students can download audio recordings from university course websites, to clarify areas that they may not have understood in the lectures or just to practice or fulfill the assigned tasks. With relevance to cognitive theories, the use of podcast by students enlists with reported advantages of learning through multiple senses (Mayer & Moreno, 2003).

This paper indicates that information is better received and processed through both auditory and visual channels.

Podcasting is an effective tool that can be used to do what just mentioned. In fact, some students learn most effectively by listening to audio and reviewing taking notes (Boulos, Maramba & Wheeler, 2006) or listening to it repeatedly, others learn more effectively by active listening and watching videos.

Podcasts provide additional resources for students who are unable to attend face to face classes due to sickness, work or family responsibilities; in the way they can listen to podcasts commonly at home or traveling.

Podcasting, as mentioned in this Project, requires only a computer or mp3 player. Students can download podcasts and listen to them directly from home or University computers or in the street. Therefore, students do not have to buy new equipment or learn sophisticated technologies in order to access podcasts. Most of them now have a mobile phone or MP3 player available for this kind of activities (Kennedy, Judd, Churchward, Gray & Krause, 2008).

A closer look at podcasting reveals the following benefits, such as the already mentioned ease of accessibility, archive of lessons, updates, learn on the go and especially what this paper wants to focus on is the creative way of learning a second language and its effects on student's enhance.

As already mentioned, one of the most obvious facilities is the easy access to the information at any time and any place. Students can also download a podcast to their own device and listen/watch whenever they are free as it requires only basic technical knowledge and skills. Moreover, in case teacher or students misses a class, audios or videos can be posted online and be available on the institute's online platform.

One of the most important peculiarities that makes an audio or video a real podcast is the possibility to subscribe and receive notifications if there is an update. A major advantage of podcasting is that students who have subscribed will be sent information constantly, unlike a virtual learning website that students have to be motivated to visit it.

The aim of this paper is showing how learning is no longer a sedentary activity, but up-to-date and especially pleasant to practice both in the classroom and at one own pace and this makes a secure on-the-go learning process. It stimulates different types of learners as students can learn visually through videos and PDFs, auditory through audio clips, and also by doing it physically. Thus, students are motivated to learn and excel. Consequently, the research is due to analyze the student's perception on students' perception practicing podcasting and see if their listening comprehension skills get better.

Unlike the traditional pedagogic strategies, podcasting gives way to new strategies like guest lectures, interviews, video demonstrations, etc. It encourages students to develop their own podcasts, improves their listening skills and enhances learning by targeting each child's interest.

Potential disadvantages of using podcasts

There are a number of possible disadvantages for using podcasting. One of the main problems that may arise, if not monitored, is that podcasting can be misused by its users. Students may not be dedicated or pay much attention when listening to it; just because they're free to use it any time they want, does not mean it is easy to understand it or easy to prepare for an exam based on the podcasted material.

Podcasting has also been argued to lead to passive learning with students focusing on the audio facility rather than actively engaging with the content (Palmer & Devitt, 2007). This perception is considered a disadvantage, based on the constructivism point of view, as it estimates that a learner gets to the point and deep learning only when is actively engaged in learning activities.

Although listening to podcasts may be considered to be a passive skill, recent work on language learning values it as an active and creative process of interpreting information from auditory clues. (Kavakiauskiene, 2008). Brittain et al, (2006) surveyed students' preferences for different kind of learning tools and surprisingly they found out that students prefer the podcasts, possibly because they could listen to the podcasts while engaging in other tasks. An understanding of the way in which students use podcasts will inform the way in which podcasts can be used most effectively.

A very famous song called "Video Killed the Radio Star" (1979) by British band The Buggles, deals with modern technology, specifically video, and its effects on radio. There is a repeated line "We can't rewind we've gone too far," but just like fashion, radio stars have resurfaced in a new digital form: podcasters.

The rise of podcasting presents a great opportunity for teachers to create a unique approach. Many students are more auditive and are able to absorb more information when they are listening than reading. The aim of this paper is to understand if the role of podcasts is fundamental in improving the listening comprehension skills of students at second level from different specializations at Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo Campus Morona Santiago. This approach stimulates and encourages creative thinking and open communication among teachers and students. Podcasts as a learning tool is in honing the language skills of non-native English speakers. Listening to unfamiliar words helps students learn proper pronunciation and contextual meaning, especially if they can follow along with a transcript. Recently, teachers have been encouraged by listening researchers to do more to educate learners about how to listen and be innovative in their way of teaching. One way of achieving this is through metacognitive instruction, a deep learning process as listeners in a second language context and their understanding of the challenges of L2, as well as improving their listening comprehension (Goh, 2008).

While such teaching technique seems undoubtedly valuable for developing learners' listening comprehension, it can also have disadvantages and limits in the way learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) are exposed to it just for limited

hours in the classroom, and they have less opportunities to practice and improve the language. The solution is obviously podcasting, which offers and enables learners to free access to listening material from within authentic L2. (Robin, 2007).

Anytime and anywhere, learners can select from, subscribe to, and download podcasts via the internet according to their needs and interests and this is pointed out by different publications (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007), which stated aspects like facilitating learners' comprehension of grammar (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007), and abilities (Robin, 2007) such as operating play, pause, reverse, and fast forward controls on a media player.

In conclusion, it is evident that there is growing support for making the use of podcasts part of learners' regular L2 listening routine outside the classroom.

The aims of this research are to examine the challenges that students face in listening to various authentic English podcasts and analyze learners' self-assessment data on improving listening skills. The intended outcome of research is to formulate the tips for good practice in listening skills.

It has been argued that by using different modes of presentation such as text, sound, video, etc. learners process the information through different channels and as a consequence they memorize it in different ways. This will help learners to improve their comprehension skills (Mayer, 2000).

Students' learning styles should be taken into account as well so that the process of teaching and learning becomes more effective. Therefore, should be considered mentioned ways of learning through perception channels like auditory, visual, tactual and/or kinesthetic (Dunn & Dunn, 1999). More specifically, podcasting is especially beneficial for those who prefer to learn through the auditory channel. It has become a popular new medium worldwide. Stanley (2006) suggested that "podcasts could be used as a supplement to textbook material, a source of authentic listening materials, a way for students to gain information on specific aspects of the language such as idiomatic expression or grammatical construction" (as cited in O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007, p. 165). Chan et al. (2011) asserts that a "podcast can support students' learning not just in listening but in other language skills and areas as well such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, speaking and learning strategies" (p. 34).

General Objective

To evaluate the podcasts effectiveness as a strategy in the improvement (development) of listening skills with students at college level.

Specific objectives

- To diagnose the relevance of podcasts in English classes at university level.
- To establish the audio and video podcasts as an additional strategy to develop listening skills.
- To analyze the student's perceptions about the use of podcasts in listening comprehension.
- To determine the connection between the video and audio podcasts in listening comprehension.

Methodology

This quasi-experimental study was conducted in a university setting where students are majoring in different areas. In the first years of instruction, students need to attend English classes and pass four English levels in any of the four areas of majoring. In other words, students attend general English classes with the same curriculum and use the same materials; even though, they are not majoring in the same area. English is mandatory and at the end of fourth level, students have to demonstrate a command of English at least of level B2 band in the Common European Framework of Reference for language. So, students who participated in this research used

American Jetstream pre-intermediate English book, attending level II (A2/B1).

There were 59 participants in the study. 30 of them majoring in Zootechnics and 29 in Accounting and Auditing respectively. Although the participants are from two different careers, the teacher who was the active researcher worked with both groups from the beginning until the end of this project. Moreover, the students attended the same period of classes during the semester. That is to say, during a week, students took 8 periods of English with a length of 60 minutes each period. Besides, students not only listened to the audio or video podcasts, there were further activities that were developed after the exposure to the listening elements. Completing cloze tests, matching, identifying words, short answers and dictation were techniques that helped to control students' independent work. Additional tasks were added in order to have students understand the importance of podcasting so that they could feel motivated to keep listening until getting familiarized with the vocabulary.

Students who used the video podcasting had to watch it at least five times. Complementary activities were developed at home and in classes. It is important to mention that the selected videos had subtitles so students could understand better the vocabulary and grammar structures. Conversely, students who were exposed to audio podcasting used transcripts to understand the vocabulary and check pronunciation.

Materials and methods

During English classes undergraduate students had to use the book and the books' platform to complete all the tasks presented and approved in the syllabus at the beginning of the semester. However, to conduct this research, accommodation was required to work on the podcast activities inside and outside classes.

The teacher selected carefully the podcasts from webpages with topics related to news that were going on local and around the world. Also, the length of the audios was also carefully checked. The audios or videos were no more than 5 minutes length since it was an additional task to complete and students could feel overwhelmed by the amount of tasks. Voice of America English News (VOA) was the main web page from which the audios and videos were used. The information provided in this web page is relevant and educational ("Voice of America - Learn American English with VOA Learning English", 2019). This webpage was selected since there are videos and audios based on interviews, lectures or demonstrations to be able to watch in class or in any other place or time. Furthermore, there were two groups and those students who are in Zootechnics were exposed to videos podcasts; on the other hand, participants from Accounting and Auditing were exposed to audio podcast. Copley (2007) conducted a study and concluded that video podcasts impact is better than audio podcasts. However, this study tends to compare if students improve their listening skill with the use of audio or video podcast and see if there is a difference in the use of these two types of podcasts.

As well as, two tests were used to conduct this research. The Preliminary English Test (PET) from Cambridge served as pretest and posttest. This one was selected since includes the four language skills. Eventually, only the listening part was chosen in both stages. Students only listened twice each part with a total of 25 questions because these are the instructions to apply this test ("Examen PET Cambridge | Guía de Certificados de Inglés", 2019).

In addition, interviews were applied at the end of the study to understand students' perceptions about the mentioned strategy and to reach clear conclusions and further recommendations.

Results and discussion

The pretest and posttest were applied to all participants in order to diagnose how the use of video or audio podcasts affects student listening comprehension. With 59 participants a pretest was administered at the beginning of the semester and after six weeks there was a posttest to compare results. The pretest showed a mean of 6.6 in Accounting and Auditing group, and 7.1 in Zootechnics students (see Figure 1).

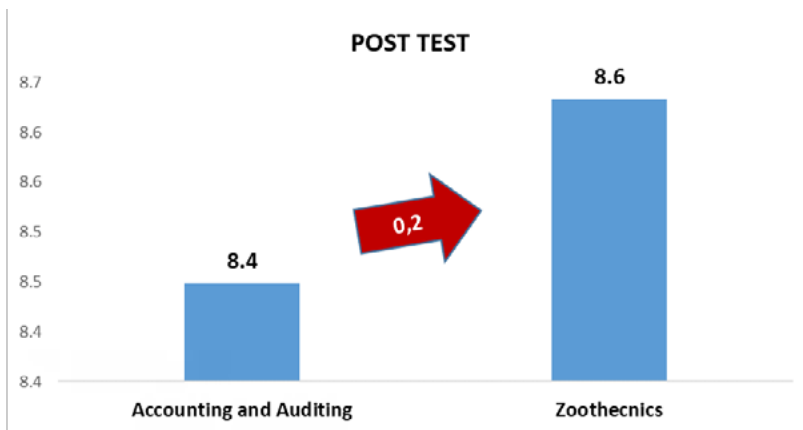
Figure 1: Accounting and Auditing and Zootechnics mean in the pretest of listening skills (PET)



Note: There were 30 participants from Zootechnics and 29 participants from Accounting and Auditing.

After completing the application of the use of podcast as a listening activity, the results in the posttest demonstrated that students improved their abilities to listen to the foreign language and there was a slight difference in the use of video podcast and audio podcast. Students from Accounting and Auditing differ from Zootechnics participants with 0.2 points. The difference is not relevant (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Accounting and Auditing and Zootechnics mean in the pretest of listening skills (PET)



Note: There were 30 participants from Zootechnics and 29 participants from Accounting and Auditing.

However, the most important point in this analysis is that students improved their listening comprehension (see Table 1).

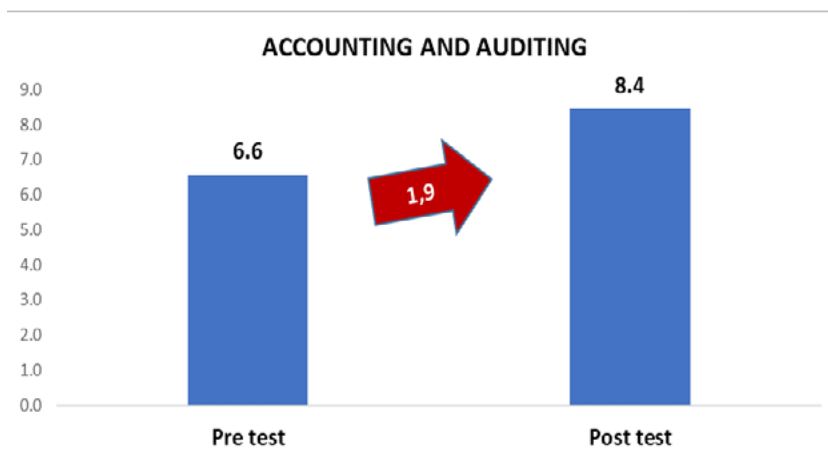
Table 1: Pretest and Posttest results

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|----------|----|---------|---------|------|
| Pretest | 59 | 2 | 16 | 6.85 |
| Posttest | 59 | 4 | 17 | 8.5 |

Note: the total score is 25 according to the test used (PET)

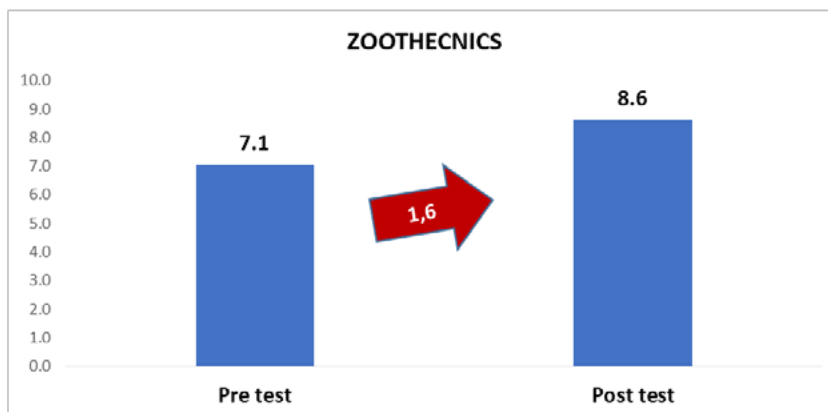
Accounting and Auditing participants improved about 1.9 points comparing the results from the pretest and the posttest (see Figure 3). On the other hand, Zootechnics results differ from the pretest and posttest with 1.6 points (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Accounting and Auditing mean in the pretest and posttest of listening skills (PET)



Note: the total score is 25 according to the test used (PET)

Figure 4: Zootechnics mean in the pretest and posttest of listening skills (PET)



Note: the total score is 25 according to the test used (PET)

Since students demonstrated that their scores improved compared with the pretest, it can be concluded that the use of podcasts is beneficial for students in a setting where English is learned as a foreign language and the exposure to this language is not common. However, it has to be clear that the total score of the test used in this study is 25 and the mean is 8.5 in the post test which differs from the pretest which was 6.85. So, 8.5 out of 25 is not considered as a good level of listening comprehension.

In addition, students' interviews were recorded and code to understand how students felt during the application of this activity. The codes used to cite students opinions are ZS= students from Zootechnics career and AS= Accounting and Auditing students.

Students' responses that were more relevant are:

ZS1) "This activity was interesting and we need to understand the importance of English since it depends on our effort."

ZS2) "I think that listening videos was motivating; however, I consider that the videos must be about our needs and career. I am studying the animals and plants and in the future I would like to research about those topics and the information is in English. I need to help my people (locals) to improve their life style and here there is a lot to do but the English language knowledge is my limitation to access information."

ZS3) "the pace of the videos was not helpful because it was too fast and I did not understand at all. It is also the reason why I did not listen at home as you suggested from three to five times."

AS1) "the audio was not clear and it was not interesting to hear news with a transcript. The information was not relevant for me."

AS2) "the audios should be easier to understand since I did not understand well and I really need more help from my instructor to understand it in a better way."

As it was mentioned before, the audios and videos were chosen according to the daily situations that are occurring around the world; however, students noticed that the audios and videos should be related with the area they are majoring in because this selection can help them to increase their knowledge. Many of the interviewees perceived the importance of listening comprehension while learning a language and their poor command in listening skills. They noted how important is to comprehend what others say in order to communicate ideas and mostly comprehend messages.

Finally, the use of video podcasts was better than audio podcast since students who were exposed to only listen with a transcript got a lower score compared with those students who were exposed to video podcasts.

Conclusions

The results of this study demonstrated that using extra materials like podcasts can be beneficial for those students who are pretending to improve their language skills. Not only listening, but also vocabulary can be improved through listening podcasts. It is necessary to consider that the topics of a podcast must be relevant for students. Participants' contributions demonstrated that sometimes it was not meaningful to listen or watch videos since the information was meaningless. Moreover, the instructors in language classes must consider how students work inside and outside classes since some students do not like English and they avoid following suggestions and instructions to progress in their new language acquisition. In other words, teachers must be aware that some students will not listen to podcast since they are not motivated to hear them outside classes and sometimes they are reluctant to listen during classes. So, the recommendations made by students in the interviews must be considered as compulsory when including podcasting activities in a foreign language classroom.

Also, these recommendations can lead to further research related with students' interests and more external factors that can affect listening skills development in an EFL setting.

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3

Chapter 3

The most common errors
within the written
discourse of EFL beginners
at Ecuadorian universities

The most common errors within the written discourse of EFL beginners at Ecuadorian universities

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The most common errors within the written discourse of EFL beginners at Ecuadorian universities

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Abstract

Making errors while learning a language is nothing else than part of the learning process itself. The transfer of the mother tongue (L1) into a second language (L2) acquisition process is inevitable and mainly noticeable in the initial learning levels. The results of an Error Analysis (EA) in the written discourse become an advantage in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) since it provides a clear image of what should be reinforced in the classroom. The aim of this study is to identify the most common errors made by EFL beginning level Ecuadorian college students in their written discourse. The researchers elaborated a linguistic corpus from writing samples provided by a group of forty-five students from three public universities in Ecuador. The EA process yields a high percentage of errors related to Word Missing; Form Spelling; Lexical Single; Lexico-Grammar, Verbs, Complementation; Style, Grammar, Verbs, Number; Grammar Articles; and, Grammar – Adjective Order. Errors in the analyzed samples mainly occur due to the interference and negative transfer resulting from the L1 (Spanish) over the L2 (English). Poor lexical and grammar knowledge are also causatives of the errors found in the study.

Keywords: error analysis, transfer L1-L2, EFL, writing, writing errors.

Introduction

The language learning process generates more than one cognitive procedure at once, as it has been previously pointed out by different linguistics; Noam Chomsky for instance, emphasizes the child's intrinsic ability to acquire the language throughout his first years of life (Chomsky, 1959; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Saville-Troike, 2006-2012; Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017). This process is what he called LAD or Language Acquisition Device. Other theories focus on how the environment influences the language learning acquisition development as well as other external factors that can directly affect it; Skinner's Behavioral theory is a clear example of it (See Skinner, 1957).

The way in which one can acquire a second language has been the main issue of different studies that try to establish the mechanisms of this process along with determining the proper methodology to obtain better results. When we allude to a group of students in an EFL class, it is indispensable to think about their social environment, besides the clear influence of their L1 throughout the learning course. These factors have led linguists and teachers to consider EA as a possible tool to clarify concepts about common mistakes among learners during their language acquisition period (Corder, 1967-1975; James, 2013), as well as important

means to improve their expertise in the class. As a matter of fact, Carrió-Pastor & Mestre-Mestre (2014) suggest that “the errors found in writing can illuminate the writing process and help us to understand the mechanisms that the non-native speaker adopts” (p. 99).

Contrast Analysis

Error Analysis cannot be described without defining Contrast Analysis (CA). CA studies the student’s L1 in addition to the target language, through establishing their differences as similarities (Lado, 1957; Corder, 1981; Shaghi, 2013-2014). In other words, one depends on the other. The comparison between the L1 and the L2 can predict the probable difficulties along the learning development. The contrast or comparative studies will help the teacher to know what to teach and when to do it.

Lado, in his book “Linguistics Across Culture” (1957), mentions the innate transfer of the native language general rules into the language being acquired, throughout the learning momentum. It is necessary to indicate that the transfer could be positive or negative as stated by Lado (Presada & Badea, 2014). As one of the most important advantages of the CA, it gives us the opportunity to interpret which concepts could be positively transferred from one language to the other (Murad, 2013).

An error is not a mistake

At this point, it is indispensable to make clear the difference between an error and a mistake. An error is a systematic deviation from a specific rule that cannot be corrected. Meanwhile, a mistake is a random lapse that can be auto-corrected (Shaghi, 2013-2014; James, 2013). EA can be considered as a study technique while the Linguistic Corpus is the main aim of it. Some authors contemplated Corpus Linguistics as a methodology rather than a theory (Castillejos, 2009). In fact, it has been said that Corpus Linguistics is a “Whole system of methods and principles of how to apply corpora in language studies and teaching/learning it certainly has a theoretical status” (Mc Enery, Siao & Tono, 2006, p. 7).

The interrelation between EA and the Linguistic Corpus aids to enrich the second language acquisition process, keeping their rules as they interrelate. By analyzing errors, we can have an idea how the L2 is being learned (Murad, 2013) in addition to defining the internal structures that each student creates to assimilate the new language; Selinker (1972) characterizes this last process as Interlanguage. Consequently, EA “scrutinizes the learners’ errors to shed light on the learners’ in-process interlanguage system” (Yildiz, 2016, p. 58).

The interlanguage is born from the relation between the two different language systems (Native / Second Language). This connection results in a new one. Ac-

According to Selinker (1972), there are five reasons for the language acquisition process: transfer of the language and formal education, learning strategies for a second language such as association and communication, and over-generalization of the material corresponding to the language being learned.

Transferring from the native language into the target language is the main origin of most of the common errors in the learning process (Richards, 1971-1974-1977; Taylor & Chen, 1991), in addition to the interference of L1 in the acquisition of L2. Errors related to interference are traditionally known as intralingual errors (James, 1998; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1992; Saville-Troike, 2006-2012; Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017). In most cases, this factor emerges due to the null exposure of the students to the language being learned, which enables them to absorb the language as their own.

Motivation is another key component of the complete acquisition development (Miles, 2002). Traditionally the books used in the EFL class did not adjust to the reality of the students; neither had they considered the different problems that students could face during the learning process of the L2. Applying EA as an instrument allows to determine the possible causes of the difficulties experienced during the instruction by both the students and the teacher (Miles, 2002).

Nevertheless, it is essential to take into account that it could be difficult to label a mistake as exclusively grammatical or lexical. The categories which are to be used in an error analysis study must be thoroughly explained in a way that avoids confusion and also allows the language teacher to understand the appropriate teaching measures which are needed in order to fulfill students' expectations (Salem, 2007). The aim of any EA study is to provide meaningful feedback depending on the type of error detected. Associative Learning is a key ingredient in the process of acquiring a new language and it could be a valuable tool when correcting common errors. Fluency could also be enhanced through word combinations or repeated associations according to the different contexts students may be involved into in the future (Barcroft, 2017).

Error tagging system

In 1996, a group of scientists (Dagneaux, Denness, Granger, & Meunier), led by Dagneaux, at the Corpus Linguistic Centre in the Catholic University of Louvain, created a method of qualifying errors which is composed on seven labels to catalogue the most common errors according to the following categories:

- Formal Errors: (F) Morphological Errors (misspelling/ word order)
- Grammar Errors: (G) Errors against Grammar rules (proper use of articles, prepositions, pronouns, verb order, etc.)
- Lexical: (L) Improper use of the semantic properties of the words or phrases.

- Lexical-Grammatical Errors: (X) Violating the syntactic and morphological qualities of the words. (Countable/Uncountable, etc.)
- Redundancy of words: (W) Improper word order or missing words in the speech.
- Register: (R) The errors which occur when expressing an idea or through the speech along with the type of it (level of formality, Written vs. Oral production)
- Style: (S) When the oral speech is restricted, not clear or incomplete.

In 1998, Dagneaux, Denness y Granger, through the ICLE error tagging Project: analysis of Spanish EFL writer, created a computer-based technique named Computer-Aided Error Analysis (CEA), whose main goal was to optimize the process of analyzing errors that was usually done by hand. It is necessary to point out that, according to their findings, the most common errors are the lexical ones, including conceptualization, placement or meaning (See Dagneaux, Denness, & Granger, 1998). In 2008, Dagneaux, Denness, Granger, Meunier, Neff, & Thewissen, launched the 1.3 version of the program with included error labeling, register and punctuation code.

Previous studies about EA

In a case study (Fossilization and acquisition: a case study of learner language) conducted by researchers at the University of Costa Rica Linguistic College, a group of English students, as well as students of the English Language career, were taken as a sample (Hasbún, 2007). The researchers found that the most common errors in the participants' written production were the use of prepositions and articles. These errors showed to be the result of fossilization problems ("premature cessation of development in defiance of optimal learning conditions" (Han, 2004, p. 23)) over these grammar aspects even though they had repeatedly been explained in the classes. The omission of sentence subjects, concordance between the subject and the verb, was other important error commonly repeated by these students, especially during the first levels of instruction.

Similarly, in his study, Londoño-Vásquez (2008) analyzed the written composition by a Colombian university student who had been studying English at a public university in Antioquia for over five months. The results of this case study showed that the student made four types of major errors (omission, additions, misinformation, and misordering); the researcher also found errors linked to the Spanish interference into English learning. Another study conducted by Castillejos (2009), for the Autonomous University of Chapingo, Mexico, showed that most errors analyzed in her study were the product of the influence of the L1 on the learning development of the L2. In this case, 4 out of 10 errors directly corresponded to

this concept. Therefore, L1 influence over the L2 reports being a significant aspect to take into consideration through the analysis of the data obtained.

To summarize, EA and CA are two decisive tools in the teaching and learning of a second or foreign language. They provide teachers with the means to understand the concepts that need to be reinforced in the classroom, in addition to helping them to develop new strategies and techniques to enhance the complete teaching-learning experience of the foreign language (Miles, 2002). Among these considerations, it is indispensable to acknowledge that there are other factors that could affect positively or negatively the learning process, some of them, worth to mention, are the motivation, the quality of the input given by the teacher, students' aptitude towards the language, class materials, among others, (Hasbún, 2007).

Bearing in mind this, the objective of this research study is to identify the most common errors in the written speech of Ecuadorian college students at the beginner level. We expect to provide English teachers with a reference of what errors their students might most commonly make so that they can make decisions about how to counteract these limitations and improve their students learning process.

Methodology

The study took into consideration the error analysis process by Castillejos (2009) and suggested by Corder (1974): gathering of samples, categorization of errors, description, and explanation of errors. The first two steps are considered in this section and the other two will be illustrated in the results and discussion section.

Gathering of samples

The corpus of data of this study was collected in 6 months, from March to August of the year 2017. The samples consisted in pieces of writing of 45 students (both males and females) enrolled in the first level of English in three public universities of Ecuador: University of Guayaquil, University of Cuenca and Technical University of Machala. The students' age ranked from 18 to 25. As part of their course work, the students wrote paragraphs covering topics related to daily activities in present tense, such as daily routine, people they admire, friends, family, and autobiographies. Fifteen paragraphs were randomly selected from each university. The paragraphs consisted of 50 to 80 words.

Procedure for the categorization of errors

Errors were identified by following the error tagging system coding proposed by Dagneaux et al. (1996). Individually, the authors built up a list of sentences or phrases that contained the errors they had found in the samples collected in their universities. After that, they evaluated the errors and determined the type of errors

they belonged to. Then to avoid misinterpretations, the authors exchanged the samples, analyzed the errors again and verified if they were not erroneously labeled. A color-coding system was used to build up the list of sentences/phrases that contained the errors. In this manner, the authors assigned a color for each category in the error tagging system table and then proceeded to highlight a sentence that exemplifies the mistake with the corresponding color in the written sample.

After the authors identified the mistakes in the written discourse of their EFL students, they created a list of errors entering the results in a spreadsheet to keep track of the findings and to identify the frequency of such data. In some cases, the authors determined more than one possible error category in a phrase or sentence. Table 1 shows the six codes used with their sub codification respectively, sixteen in total. The table of the codes and sub-codes system was adjusted considering the needs of the present study.

Table 1: Errors Codes and Sub codes (adapted from Dagneaux et al., 1998)

| Formal Errors (F) | |
|---|--|
| FS | Form Spelling |
| Grammatical Errors (G) | |
| GA | Grammar Articles |
| GADJN | Grammar - Adjective Number |
| GADJO | Grammar - Adjective Order |
| GNN | Grammar- Nouns, Number |
| GP | Grammar- Pronouns |
| GVN | Grammar, Verbs, Number |
| GVT | Grammar, Verbs, Tense |
| Lexical Errors (L) | |
| LS | Lexical Single |
| Style Errors (S) | |
| S | Style (long, foreign-sounding, clumsy) |
| SI | Style, Incomplete |
| SU | Style, Unclear |
| Word redundant/word missing/word order Errors (W) | |
| WM | Word Missing |
| WO | Word Order |
| LeXico-grammatical Errors (X) | |
| XVCO | LeXico-Grammar, Verbs, Complementation |
| XVPR | LeXico-Grammar, Verbs, Dependent Preposition |

Note: Code and sub codes used in this study.

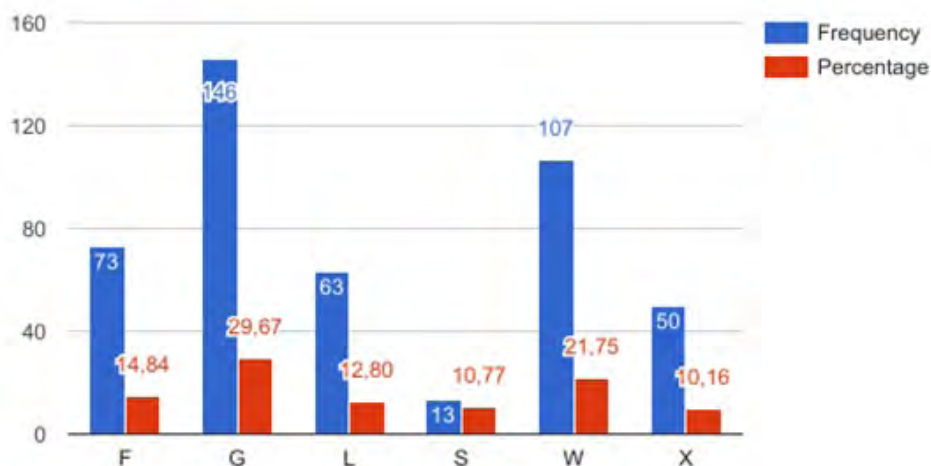
Results and Discussion

After analyzing the data, it was possible to identify the most common errors of the written discourse of beginning level Ecuadorian students. As previously mentioned, to achieve the identification of such errors, the authors used the labeling model proposed by Dagneaux et al. (1996). The methodological procedure applied to analyze the collected data was the characterization of the errors from the samples, description of the errors, and their explanation (Corder, 1974). The explanations provided throughout the interpretation of the results was supported by already existing foreign language learning theories such as CA, EA, and the transfer theory, among others.

Description

The results show that the most common errors in the written production of students from the three universities were related to grammar: redundancy/word missing/word order, and errors related to the formal aspect. In figure 1, we can see the different error codes, the number, and frequency of errors from the analyzed sample. The numbers and percentages specified in the graphic are the results of the addition of all the errors found in all the subcodes that refer to the general codes.

Figure 1. Total Number of Errors by Code



Note: Number and percentage of errors by code

Table 2: Samples of errors found

| No | CODES /SUB CODES | EXAMPLES | FREQUENCY | % |
|----|------------------|---|-----------|-------|
| 1 | FS | I go to the universty \$university\$ | 73 | 14,84 |
| | | I brush my theed \$teeth\$ | | |
| | | I was born in piñas \$Piñas\$, but i \$I\$ live in cuenca \$Cuenca\$ | | |
| 2 | GA | a \$an\$ excellent person | 32 | 6,50 |
| | | They like the \$O\$ food ecuadorian | | |
| | | My name is a \$O\$ Roberto Sánchez. | | |
| 3 | GADJN | goods \$good\$ characteristics ... | 2 | 0,41 |
| | | We are happies \$happy\$... | | |
| 4 | GADJO | ... with a Coca Cola cold \$cold Coca Cola\$. | 30 | 6,10 |
| | | She is an accountant very professional \$very professional accountant\$ | | |
| 5 | GNN | the peoples \$people\$ | 23 | 4,67 |
| | | Kevin plays the drum \$drums\$ and sing. | | |
| | | I go home with my parent \$parents\$... | | |
| 6 | GP | I consider me \$myself\$ | 19 | 3,86 |
| | | Me \$I\$ like | | |
| | | I love they \$them\$ | | |
| 7 | GVN | I are \$am\$ very patient. | 34 | 6,91 |
| | | He like \$likes\$ the music. | | |
| | | She have \$has\$ short business. | | |
| 8 | GVT | Adriana is use \$wearing\$ | 6 | 1,22 |
| | | Adriana is use \$wearing\$ | | |
| 9 | LS | use \$swear\$ brown jackets | 63 | 12,80 |
| | | look \$watch\$ cartoons... | | |
| | | I have \$am\$ 19 years old. | | |
| 10 | S | He like the \$O\$ music. | 40 | 8,13 |
| | | I like make \$practice\$ sports. | | |
| | | have a \$O\$ time with my family. | | |
| 11 | SI | because \$I\$ want to\$ become \$a\$ great engineer.... | 8 | 1,63 |
| | | My routine \$starts at\$ 7 am \$when\$ I \$have\$ breakfast ... | | |
| | | Then \$I\$ go\$ back ... | | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|------|--|-----|-------|
| 12 | SU | on weekends of all her classmates at university \$I meet my university classmates on weekends\$ | 5 | 1,02 |
| | | I is a sleeping and baby \$I sleep with my baby\$ | | |
| 13 | WM | \$I\$ usually do a lot of exercise. | 104 | 21,14 |
| | | because \$he\$ is a wonderful person | | |
| | | It is \$a\$ city in Ecuador. | | |
| 14 | WO | I all weekends in the tomorrow go the running in the park \$I go running in the park every weekend in the mornings\$ | 3 | 0,61 |
| | | all days playing videogames \$play videogames every-day\$... | | |
| | | ...uncle house's \$uncle's house\$... | | |
| 15 | XVCO | my dream is graduate \$to graduate\$... | 44 | 8,94 |
| | | I like ride \$riding\$ my mountain bike. | | |
| 16 | XVPR | She like listen \$listen to\$ music. | 6 | 1,22 |
| | | go \$go to\$ the university... | | |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS | | | 492 | 100 |

Note: Results obtained with their list, code or sub code, examples, frequency, and percentage.

Table 2 shows examples of each type of error found in the students' writing samples, accompanied by their specific subcode, frequency, and percentage. In some of the examples illustrated in Table 2, more than one error is evidenced. However, in those examples, we only refer to the specific part for which they were taken as evidence. The explanation of all errors was accounted for the frequency, as it can be observed in the following part.

Explanation of errors

The analyzed samples revealed that beginners make a high number of errors related to the subcode WM as it can be observed next: because **\$he\$** is a wonderful person. Just like what was found in (Hasbún, 2007), students particularly omit words that comply the function of the subject (mainly subject pronoun), verbs and prepositions. As Spanish-language users, we can assert that the omission of subject pronouns is highly frequent within Spanish discourse due to the implied condition of the grammatical person in this language.

In some cases, verbs are also omitted such as in I **\$am\$** twenty years old because students assume that the action is implicit in the complement of the sentence. This idea can be affirmed from the experiences the authors have had in their classes. On several occasions, they have found the same mistake patterns and asked their student to show them the verb in the sentence, and they immediately pointed and explained that it was there (in the complement part of the sentence). Another

reason why students omit verbs and other words is because they have poor knowledge of their function and how sentences are structured.

In an example of the subcode FS, the student changes the spelling of the word apples in the sentence: I like appols **\$apples\$**. This is because, in Spanish, words are written the same way they are pronounced. Something that does not happen in English as the pronunciation of most English words differs from their written form. Therefore, the student is transferring his L1 knowledge into his L2 production. Negative L1 transference into the L2 is one of the common factors for the emergence of errors in the learners' discourse as it has been found in other studies such as the study conducted by Castillejos (2009).

Errors linked to the subject pronoun "I" are also found in the students' writings, especially when it is used in the middle of a sentence. In English, this pronoun should always be written in capital letters, but students write it in lowercase when it is not at the beginning of a sentence. E.g.: I was born in piñas **\$Piñas\$**, but i **\$I\$** live in cuenca **\$Cuenca\$**. Here, we can also see spelling errors associated with proper nouns; this type of errors is also seen in the students' L1.

I knew **\$met\$** him last year is an example of errors associated with the subcode LS. This type of errors appears due to students' limited ability to recognize which word to use in certain contexts. The absence of words choice awareness leads them to use verbs such as "know and meet," which in Spanish mean "conocer," interchangeably; without reflecting that, in English, these words are used in different ways.

Another reason for these errors to happen is the absence of vocabulary in the students' lexicon. The lack of vocabulary prompts students to use their few available vocabulary resources and translate them into the wrong use of the word itself; such is the case of "use." English speakers use the verb "wear" when referring to wear clothes and "use" to make use of something. Spanish speakers do not make such differences for these definitions. Therefore, this word is employed as both "wear" and "use" in this language.

The errors associated with the subcode XVCO demonstrate the poor handling of grammatical rules. For example, the student does not know which rule applies to verbs when they are part of a structure that complements another verb. In the example I like ride **\$riding\$** my mountain bike, we can see how the student writes "like ride" without considering that the verb "ride" should be written in its infinitive form or its gerund form.

The types of errors found in the subcategory S clearly reflect the influence of the L1 on the second language. In the example, I can play the guitar from the seventeen years old **\$since I was seventeen\$**, the student made use of his L1 knowledge and wrote this sentence word by word, which does not necessarily work in English. This practice makes the language learner's written output have a foreign sound.

In the sub-code GVN, errors mainly relate to the conjugation of verbs in third

person singular (he, she, it), where the general grammatical rule is to add an “s” to the verb, except for those special verbs like “have.” Quite often the omission of the “s” is evident as in He likes **\$likes\$** the music. In the example, She has **\$has\$** two pets, the error indicates that student ignores the conjugation of the third person singular and writes “have” when he had to write “**has**.” In this other example, My favorite colors is **\$are\$** blue and red., we can observe that the student does not recognize his subject, so he writes the wrong form of the verb to be. My favorite colors represent the subject pronoun “**they**,” therefore, it must be accompanied by the conjugation of the verb to be “**are**.”

The errors included in the subcategory GA are related to the omission, incorrect, or unnecessary use of articles. In Spanish, definite articles “**el, la, los, las**” are used more frequently whereas their equivalent in English, “the,” is only used for specific cases and when referring to a plural noun in a general way, we use zero article. Hence, in They like the **\$O\$** ecuadorian food, the student uses the definite article “**the**” unnecessarily. Likewise, the incorrect use of the articles “**a/an**” like in ... a **\$an\$** excellent person and their consistent omission in front of professions in their singular form were evidenced, my mother is **\$a\$** teacher. The latter happens because in Spanish articles are not required before professions in their singular form.

In the examples ... with a Coca Cola cold **\$cold Coca Cola\$**, She is an accountant very professional **\$very professional accountant\$**, and ... children poor **\$poor children\$** ..., which correspond to the GADJO subcode, we can see the negative transfer from the L1 to the L2 regarding the order of adjectives. In Spanish, the adjectives are placed after nouns as in “**Coca Cola cold**,” whereas in English occurs exactly the opposite, “**cold Coca Cola**.”

As noted in the introduction to this work, students in an EFL class tend to make repetitive errors as they develop their written skills. At a certain grade, making errors is acceptable because it is part of the language learning process; but if these errors keep emerging and the learners do not stop making them, such errors might become fossilized (Han, 2004).

In contexts like Ecuador, the little or the lack of exposure to the foreign language interfere negatively in the student’s language acquisition. Therefore, it is essential to reinforce grammatical and lexical awareness in the learners by applying effective strategies that would promote the internalization of rules established for the correct use of the language. By doing this, teachers will be able to reduce the number of errors made in the written discourse of language learners, in addition to providing greater security to the learner when using the L2 in real situations.

The errors discussed in the previous paragraphs respond to those errors with a higher frequency within the samples collected. Errors that respond to the subcodes GNN (4.67%); GP (3.86%); SI (1.63%); GVT (1.22%); XVPR (1.22%); SU

(1.02%); WO (0.61%); and GADJN (0.41%) were also found in the students' writing samples. They were the last mentioned due to their significantly lower emergence within the data collected. Even though they have not been explained in detail, it does not mean that they are less important. On the contrary, teachers should also consider these errors as they may appear in the written production of their students. Teachers must keep in mind that every student learns differently, consequently, a rule that might be easier for one student can be a headache for another.

In this section, we have discussed the errors that had a higher incidence in the written discourse of students from three public universities in Ecuador. The errors were withdrawn from forty-five pieces of writing produced by EFL beginner students covering topics in the simple present tense such as daily routine, people they admire, friends, family, and autobiographies. As one of its main findings, this work provides a clear idea about which linguistic resource is prone to suffer more mistakes. Such mistakes occur as a result of the influence of the L1 on the acquisition of a different language: the interlanguage that the student creates in the process; the students' poor knowledge of the language; lack of linguistic and grammatical awareness, and fossilization processes.

From the results obtained, we can suggest that beginner language learners make more WM, FS, LS, XVCO, S, GVN, GA, and GADJO errors. Such errors are common in the written output for EFL learners whose L1 is Spanish. Students with beginning English proficiency no matter the level of instruction – elementary, middle or high school, or college- are likely to follow the same error patterns. Therefore, we make a call for teachers who are practitioners at the elementary, middle, and high school levels as well as college teachers to implement techniques and strategies that would allow them to help their students overcome such errors not only in their written but also in the spoken production.

Among the limitations of this study is the lack of access to a software that would identify and classify the errors automatically. Even though the errors were meticulously classified by hand, the use of appropriate software could prevent from making mistakes. Another limitation would be the number of pieces of writing and topics selected for the sample; a more in-depth study of this topic would require a higher number of samples and a wider variety of topics for students to demonstrate their language knowledge.

For future research studies regarding this topic, we recommend the analysis of errors, made by language learners at the intermediate and advanced level, about not only the written but also their spoken output. We also suggest the use of a bigger sample for the study. Similarly, it would be important to study how Ecuadorian teachers address errors; it means how they correct them so that they do not become fossilized in the students' knowledge.

To summarize, language learners are most likely to make errors related to WM,

FS, LS, XVCO, S, GVN, GA, and GADJO. Errors related to GNN, GP, SI, GVT, XVPR, SU, WO, and GADJN also occur but in less frequency. No matter what, all language learners make errors in their written output; it is part of the learning process. Hence, when planning their instruction, EFL teachers must consider both the errors with the highest emergence in the students writing output as well as those with least frequency. They should also refer to language theories that study the occurrence of these errors such as the transfer theory, CA, EA, fossilization, and look into the reason why these errors occur. By doing so, teachers can find suitable solutions for their teaching setting, lessen the emergence of these errors in their students' written production and help these students to move to the next level.

Conclusions

This work had the purpose of identifying the most common errors in the written discourse of a group of Ecuadorian college students at the beginning level. After analyzing the corpus consisting of forty-five paragraphs (which covered simple present topics) written by students from the first level of English in three public universities in Ecuador, we found that the most common errors are those related to Word Missing, Form Spelling, Lexical Single, Lexico-Grammar, Verbs, Complementation; Style, Grammar, Verbs, Number; Grammar Articles, and, Grammar – Adjective Order.

Every language has its conventional rules about what is allowed to do and what is not when producing the language. The findings lead us to conclude that the errors made by beginner students are mainly the result of the interference or transfer of the linguistic knowledge of the L1 into the L2. The fact that the samples analyzed came from students at the university level reveals that Ecuadorian students at this instructional level have a poor command of the lexical and grammatical resources of English, even though they received six years of EFL instruction during middle and high school and some of them even at the elementary level.

Another explanation for the appearance of such errors at this instructional level is the fossilization of those weaknesses in the students' knowledge of English as their L2. Unfortunately, since students might not have received appropriate feedback, these errors became fossilized. Therefore, the list of examples provided in the table of results represents a reference for teachers interested in turning their language teaching on the most urgent needs of their students such as the improvement of their writing skills.

Teachers need to identify the most relevant and difficult language points to make methodological decisions that seek to improve students' writing performance, and the results of this work show the linguistic areas in which teachers and learners need to put the greater emphasis. Error making is part of the learning process


of any language, but each individual reacts differently in different settings. Then, it is recommended that future researchers replicate studies of this nature at various school levels. Finally, we also suggest conducting studies about how Ecuadorian EFL teachers address their students' written and spoken errors.

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Chapter 4

Writing performance in EFL
at a college level using
peer editing

Writing performance in EFL at a college level using peer editing

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Writing performance in EFL at a college level using peer editing

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Abstract

Today, people are learning more and more languages for different reasons. To learn a language includes the development of all the skills in order to comprehend oral and written material. English, which is a universal language, is one of those languages, and it is used in different fields to promote communication. Thus, this paper focuses on one of the most important skills, which is writing. In a setting where English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL), it is essential to learn how to write correctly following the language standards. With this in mind, the following research is framed in a context where college students developed the writing skill through paragraphs and peer correction. Students were instructed in different writing topics and peer correction. During 4 weeks, in intensive writing classes, students wrote texts guided by rubrics covering the topics about e-mails, blogs, reviews, and posts. After writing the paragraphs, students worked with a peer to review and correct the text using a rubric elaborated and provided by the instructor. The number of participants were 35 who regularly attend the pre-intermediate or level II English class. During the development of peer review, the teacher researcher provided the necessary guidance to check and correct student's work through the use of rubrics and direct instruction. Then the students' autonomous work was observed through the use of an anecdotal record and interviews were applied at the end of the study. The effects of peer assessment through edition and correctness are described in this study.

Keywords: peer editing, cooperative learning

Introduction

Now, learning English has become a necessity as most information is in this language. To get access to data, which are in English, people need to decode those pieces of information; so they can learn, understand and interpret. In addition, many people are aware of the significance of this language and they attempt to learn through different resources and tools where they can develop and practice the language skills.

The need of learning English not only is on people who are living in an English speaking country; but it is in other countries, which the mother tongue is other than English. This fact, therefore, is increasing the requirement to learn and master the English language. For instance, according to Heredia (2017), Ecuadorian people over the age of 30 are those who look for more opportunities to study English for different reasons. Among those reasons are the requirements in universities of an English level B2 mostly to study a master program or get a better job.

It is noticeable the necessity of learning English since in different fields require people with a good command of English and they try to look for opportunities to learn that language (Brinton, Snow, & Celce-Murcia, 2014). There are different ways that people can learn a language. Going through language learning strategies is the first step to acquire it. Each individual has to understand and discover which learning strategies work better according to his or her own learning style, time, and available resources. Bialystok (1978) states that language learning strategies are “optional methods for exploiting available information to increase the proficiency of second language learning.” (p. 76). These strategies will be different based on the learners’ needs and the available resources.

In Ecuador, the importance of teaching and learning English in the universities has acquired more relevance in order to achieve international standards in education. According to the article 124 from the University Organic Law, with the acronym in Spanish LOES, it is the university responsibility to provide students “the mastery of a language other than their mother tongue” (LOES, 2019, p. 52). In other words, English language learning is mandatory in Ecuadorian universities curriculum. For this reason, the university system encourages to learn English since it is the most important language in these days. Therefore, university students must keep developing and improving their language skills until they achieve the level required in each venue.

In addition, there is another important reason to master the English language since the educational system requires students mostly with an English level B2 to get a master degree in all the fields and many people are seeking out master programs in order to improve their lifestyle, knowledge, and get better jobs or positions. For these reasons, English has become part of the most significant subjects in Ecuadorian education, especially at a university level and it is crucial to understand how this language can be taught and conduct research in a deepest way in this area.

English as a foreign language (EFL) means to learn English as an additional language in a setting or place where the official language is other than English (EFL, 2019). Learning English in a place where the first language (L1) is another than English does not differ significantly from a situation where English is being learned as a second language (ESL). The methodology and strategies that students, who are pretending to take over in the language skills and their daily effort to learn the foreign language, depend on their practice and exposure. Exposure in the target language is another important issue to consider while learning a language. Learners need to be surrounded by the language they need to learn.

According to Freeman and Freeman (2014), acquiring a language depends on the amount of exposure. Besides, there are more considerations to keep in mind while learning a new language. Krashen (1982) mentions among the five hypothesis language acquisition the affective filter hypothesis where he explains how important is to reduce anxiety while learning a language. The affective filter must

be low in order to learn English and teachers can do this when they provide comprehensible input considering that students should not be anxious. Furthermore, the input hypothesis refers to comprehensibility where the language instructor has to use all the available resources to help learners to understand language according to their level and this includes the language teacher uses during instruction.

In addition, students need to improve their English language knowledge through the development of the four basic skills. Listening, reading, speaking and writing are the skills that students have to dominate in order to use English in different situations, which can be to communicate something through writing or speaking, or understand information by means of reading or listening. The integration of these skills is necessary in a second language acquisition. Oxford (2001) states that the skills can be integrated through content or task based instruction. Additionally, the author mentions that incorporating all the skills of the language help students to use authentic situations and the use of language is more natural.

Taking into account all the above, language learners need to develop all the skills; however, the present work focuses on the need of developing writing skills that occurs within the English language learning. This proposal aims to know the implications of peer correction in writing skills in the English language learning with adult students. Correspondingly, it will be discussed the process that involves the writing activities focusing on the step of correction. Students were trained and applied peer correction during writing classes to reach conclusions and understand the implications of this strategy in writing development with adult students who are learning English as a foreign language.

Writing skill

Writing is considered as a skill that has acquired more importance in the 21st century (Brinton, Snow, & Celce-Murcia, 2014). Writing is a cognitive ability (language knowledge and skills) and a sociocultural fact (purpose). Writing skills acquisition can be seen from two different points. As a learning point of view, writing is acquired through direct teaching. On the other hand, from the acquisition theory, writing is developed by practice in real situations. In other words, teachers can carry out different input activities such as read and write, teach strategies, group or pair activities to get a text production (Freeman & Freeman, 2014). Therefore, the importance of seeing writing as an acquisition process will be reflected to go through the next features in the development of writing skills.

At the time of writing in English, students may encounter difficulties that may prevent them from keeping writing and they could get frustrated and avoid them to keep improving their language acquisition. As stated by Krashen (1982), acquiring a language implies a motivated learner and negative factors that can affect learning such as nervousness, anxiety, or the use of difficult language must be reduced. These aspects can lead to a desertion or lack of motivation to learn a language. Thus,

English teachers, using strategies, which either help students to improve and achieve the expected results personally or academically, will be beneficial in the process of learning the English language.

To develop writing skills, the instructor can apply writing process or product. To understand better these two terms, it is important to define and differentiate them. Klimova (2014) states that the product approach requires a text that serves as a model and students have to write something similar. In addition, Tangpermpoon (2008) argues that the product based approach focuses more on grammar and syntaxes. On the other hand, process approach is characterized by the use of creativity since students have to develop their language knowledge through brainstorming, collaborating with partners, and focusing on the audience. Brinton et al. (2014) conclude that the dominant paradigm has been process approach since the writer can compose and receive feedback followed by a facilitator's support.

After describing that a writing activity can be lead as a process or as a product, to conduct this study, the writing process was chosen since some researchers mention that the process-based approach has the advantage of providing some time to go through the steps of writing with an instructor as a guide (Tangpermpoon, 2008); writing process is known as the most dominant system in these days (Muncie, 2002). Smith (2017) says that a process is necessary to follow while writing. In other words, students need instructional time and follow a process with strategies to achieve the goals in a writing class.

Also, the process writing pedagogy defined by Susser (1994) is more suitable to develop academic and personal writing. However, there is an important consideration to keep in mind since practice is the key point in this approach. Furthermore, a writing instructor must be prepared and trained to teach writing through this process and consider its principles of awareness and intervention. Klimova (2014), in a study conducted in a setting where 14 students at a low intermediate level attended writing sessions to conclude if process or product approach are most suitable to develop writing skills, mentions that "writing is seen as a social act in which writers have to be aware of the context in which they are writing." (p. 151).

Writing skill, which is imperative to practice and develop in a language learning setting, helps to communicate the ideas. Learning to write in another language implies the use of different strategies and methods that will help to achieve the goals. Tangpermpoon (2008) argues that writing is hard because a good knowledge in "rhetorical organizations, appropriate language use or specific lexicon" (p. 1) in the target language must be well-known by the learner to start communicating ideas through the L2. Nevertheless, the writing instructor needs to understand deeply the writing process to help students achieve their purposes. Smith (2017), in his "principled approach," states that teachers need to reflect in the teaching practices so the students can scaffold in their learning process until they reach their goals.

Tompkins (2006) mentions that the writing process involves "prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing" (p. 57). However, this process is not linear

since the writer can begin with prewriting but the other steps can be done according to the development of the task during the writing activity. In other words, a writer can edit and go back to revise the piece of writing before publishing since errors can be found during the process of editing. As well as, Brinton et al. (2014) present the phases of the writing process listed as: pre-writing, writing, response, revising, editing, post-writing and evaluating (p. 226). Also, the writing activities must be student-centered so they can have enough time to practice and follow a pattern to complete the writing task successfully. Through the writing process, there is an interaction among partners and teachers to provide feedback and check understanding.

In addition, Susser (1994) argues that “students who are aware of writing process can then choose the process that suits their writing style and the particular writing task they face” (p. 35). During this process, the correct feedback must be provided in order to accomplish the goals in any kind of writing activities. Dell’Olio and Donk (2007) mention that formative assessment helps to provide feedback; so, learners can confirm or modify their learning during instructions. Furthermore, this type of evaluation allows students to self-assess and internalize their learning during a process.

Writing Assessment

Assessing writing is done through the process until they get the product. To gather information about students’ progress in the writing tasks requires the use of different techniques and tools. In formative assessment, the teacher can use quizzes, rubrics, checklists, homework or anecdotal records known as formal tools. On the other hand, informal methods can be questioning or observations. However, both formal and informal techniques are useful to evaluate students’ growth (Dell’Olio & Donk, 2007). Teachers have to look for the best teaching practice and tools to use inside and outside classes. Tompkins (2006) says that the use of rubrics helps teachers to evaluate the compositions in a holistic form. That is to say, rubrics check the performance level in the use of vocabulary, mechanics, organization and coherence.

Badger and White (2000) argue that “writing in process approaches is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting” (p. 154). Thus, the revision, correction and edition can be done through the teacher’s guide or a partner can also help to correct the works. This type of revision is considered as formative assessment because it is carried out during the development of the writing tasks. According to Wingate (2010), formative assessment tries to provide students with some information about their existing situation, and to encourage them to keep working until they achieve their goals. A study conducted by Graham, Hebert and Harris (2015) in a setting where students were assessed during

the writing process demonstrated that formative writing assessment was meaningful to improve students' writing performance.

In addition, Lee (2011) mentions that applying formative assessment in an EFL setting requires teachers' engagement, system support and to believe of changing to improve teaching practices. These conclusions were gathered through a study conducted with EFL students in writing classes. Topping, Smith, Swanson, and Elliot (2000) notice that formative assessment is much better when there is the need of "maximize success" (p. 150). Moreover, this type of assessment helps students to receive feedback focused on their assets and weakness. Frey and Fisher (2013) state that writing formative assessment not only provide feedback for teachers but for students as well. With this in mind, it is possible to use peer correction in a writing class. Classmates can correct another partner's paragraphs and provide feedback to their own partner.

Topping et al. (2000) conducted a research about formative peer assessment and concluded that peer assessment is more supportive since students improved further writing tasks. Nevertheless, the participants mentioned that peer review required a lot of time, understanding, and they did not feel comfortable with the observations provided by their peers. Additionally, Khonbi and Sadeghi (2013) studied the effect of self-assessment versus peer assessment on Iranian university EFL students and determined that participants who worked with peer-assessment performed better than those who only self-evaluated probably by the authentic assessment they provided over their peers' works. However, Mojica (2010) states that peer or self- assessment require a lot of training and in her study concluded that during a writing process, students also develop metacognitive skills.

Cooperative learning

With respect to the interaction, Smith (2017) mentions that during a writing task, peer and student conferences are required elements to help them to concrete their objectives and see their progress. Therefore, collaboration plays an important role in the writing process in English as a foreign language (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988).

Learning is a social process and students must work individually and with other peers to accomplish the tasks. Vygotsky (1986) argues that a foreign language learning is a conscious process since the learner has to begin analyzing the parts of speech to continue with the process and acquire the other abilities. Moreover, the author mentions that the skills adopted in the first language are transferred to the second langue learning since "the native language serves as an already established system of meaning." (Vygotsky, 1986. p. 197). Moreover, another important point to mention is the fact that "a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language." (p. 196). In other words, the theory of Zone of Proximal

Development (ZPD) demonstrated by Vygotsky is essential in when developing writing skills since the students' knowledge on his or her first language will influence in the target language.

Peer correction

Topping et al. (2000) define peer assessment as “an arrangement for peers to consider the level, value, worth, quality or successfulness of the products or outcomes of learning of others of similar status” (p. 150). When a partner helps to check and observe about the piece of writing, the writer can notice errors that probably was not able to identify while writing. Then the suggestions can be used in order to improve their final compositions. Studies demonstrates that peer correction is relevant and necessary to elevate students' motivations (Venables & Summit, 2003), improve grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Villamil & Guerrero1998), organize ideas and progress in more advance writing pieces (Matsuno, 2009), it is student-centered activity (Keh, 1990). Mendonca and Johnson (1994), in a study conducted with advanced ESL learners, concluded that peer review is beneficial for students.

In addition, Baker (2016) conducted a study with 91 participants and concluded that peer reviewing is highly recommend since it promotes formative feedback. Hu (2005) developed research on academic writing with Chinese EFL students and mentions that peer review benefits students because they think it is useful; however, the researcher states that students did not accept their peers' suggestions and sometimes the teachers' advice was necessary. Furthermore, peer review influence on students' writing; but teacher corrections were more significant since students prioritized them in their final versions. (Paulus,1999; & Hillocks, 1982). Positive teacher's comment also influences the development of writing tasks (Ferris, 1997). Likewise, Chaudron (1984) conducted a study with a small group of participants (n= 14) and demonstrated that peer or teacher feedback promoted improvement but none of the two types of feedback were superior. On the other hand, peer review impacts students writing performance. McGroarty and Zhu (1997) argue that students benefit from their partners' revision and improve their writing significantly. Correspondingly, they mention that peer review training is important to achieve the goals when a teacher applies this strategy, which is becoming more and more relevant in today's education. Interaction during peer feedback must be carefully considered as an elemental part because it encourages students to be engaged in the task and provide feedback correctly (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988).

One important tool to work on writing tasks are the rubrics. They support teachers to carry out the evaluation process. Schirmer and Bailey (2000) provide wide information about the use of rubrics during writing instruction. They mention that a rubric helps to assess students in different dimensions because it has to contain a scale with detailed characteristics about the features of the final product. In other

words, teachers can create their own rubrics according to the students' needs and the goals of the activity. Jonsson and Svingby (2007) concluded that rubrics are a reliable way to get scores and support the feedback process and self-evaluation.

Unquestionably, to develop writing tasks entail to look carefully all the strategies, methods and tools to end with a quality final product. Accordingly, peer review implications will be reviewed in this study to reach conclusions that can help to improve writing skills during instruction in a foreign language setting with college students.

General Objective

To apply peer editing in order to understand if college students improve their writing skills in an intermediate English class.

Specific Objectives

- To diagnose the effect of peer editing in writing tasks.
- To apply the writing approach process in order to gather information about the students' writing competence.
- To evaluate the students' errors in writing tasks to grade the level of performance.
- To analyze the implication of peer editing in order to provide meaningful information for future applications in different settings.

Methodology

This quasi experimental study was conducted in Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo (ESPOCH) – campus Morona Santiago. Undergraduate students from English level II were chosen to apply this research. There was a pre-test, which consisted in a written paragraph describing students' profiles. A rubric was provided to develop their paragraphs. According to Schirmer and Bailey (2000) rubrics “have a potential value as an instructional tool” (p. 53). However, Rezaei and Lovorn (2010) reached to the conclusions that reliability or validity of assessment is not valid only with the use of rubrics; however, students training receive on how to use rubrics and grade pieces of writing is so important. For this reason, to complete this study was also necessary to train students in the use of rubrics; so, they can check and correct their peer's paragraphs.

Students worked during 6 writing sessions which took place in the English classes during a period of 60 minutes that included writing development, peer correction, editing and final product.

A pre-test and a post-test were used to understand and examine the effects of peer review in writing tasks. In addition, during the study anecdotal records were completed to gather information through observation. At the end, a final survey was applied in order to reach conclusions about students’ perceptions on this type of strategy.

Thirty-nine undergraduate students participated in this study during the academic period March – July 2019. The participants were between 18 and 20 years old. There were 15 male and 20 female students. The teacher, who participated as an active researcher, gathered information during the development of each writing activity class. This role was important since students tend to use the electronic dictionary in order to translate their ideas and this could avoid get true information about the implications of writing improvement. Therefore, the teacher encouraged students to work following the rubric guide which was also elaborated by the researchers (see Table 1). This rubric was designed according to students’ needs and it was previously used since students have already developed writing tasks in level I and this format was socialized among all the five teachers who currently work in the university.

According to Dell’Olio and Donk (2007) a rubric can be developed by a teacher based on the needs of the class and it can contain elements to measure the levels of performance.

Table 1: Rubric to evaluate paragraphs in writing tasks

| Traits Scale | 0 Does not meet standards | 1 Below standards | 2 Partially meet standards | 3 Meet standards | 4 Exceed standards |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Grammar | | | | | |
| Mechanics | | | | | |
| Vocabulary | | | | | |
| Organization | | | | | |
| Content | | | | | |

At the end of the study, students completed a survey to understand their insights about the activities they developed during the writing classes. This survey was designed to gather information about the problems students encountered during the revisions of their pieces of writing and students’ suggestions for further writing class instruction.

Materials and methods

Students from level II who take English classes as a foreign language use different materials in order to develop their language skills. They use American Jetstream books in English classes. Also, students have access to the platform activities whenever they decide to practice their target language (Revell & Tomalin, 2016). To complete this study, it was necessary to select and focus on the writing activities contained in the book. The writing activities were related with each unit topic and there were six selected topics which were: two personal e-mails, traveling and achievements blogs, and posts expressing opinions and contrasting ideas. During 4 weeks students wrote about the six topics in writing classes in a period of one hour. The length of time students wrote individually was 30 minutes approximately. After completing the writing task, students got in pairs selected randomly to read and correct the piece of writing. According to Hu (2005), students can change partners to work cooperatively when students feel more comfortable with the task. Also, the teacher supported students when necessary since during the discussion about word choice, grammar points or spelling issues there were misunderstandings that students were not able to solve by themselves.

In this study, the use of a rubric was important; so, students were able to write and peer review with the guide of this tool. With a 0-4 rating scale, the rubric was used to get and compare information before and after the application of the strategy. Moreover, the survey helped to understand how students perceived the process and it was coded in three categories (see Table 2).

Table 2: Students’ opinions about peer revision tasks

| Category | | |
|---|---|---|
| Problems during peer reviewing | Advantages | Recommendations based on students’ experience |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of vocabulary knowledge • Grammar misunderstanding • Partners’ expertise • Time • Organization and coherence • Others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice and correct mistakes • Learning of new words • Cooperative learning and communication improvement • Use of tenses • Others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling and handwriting improvement • Review and learn more vocabulary • Organization and coherence practice • More relevant topics |

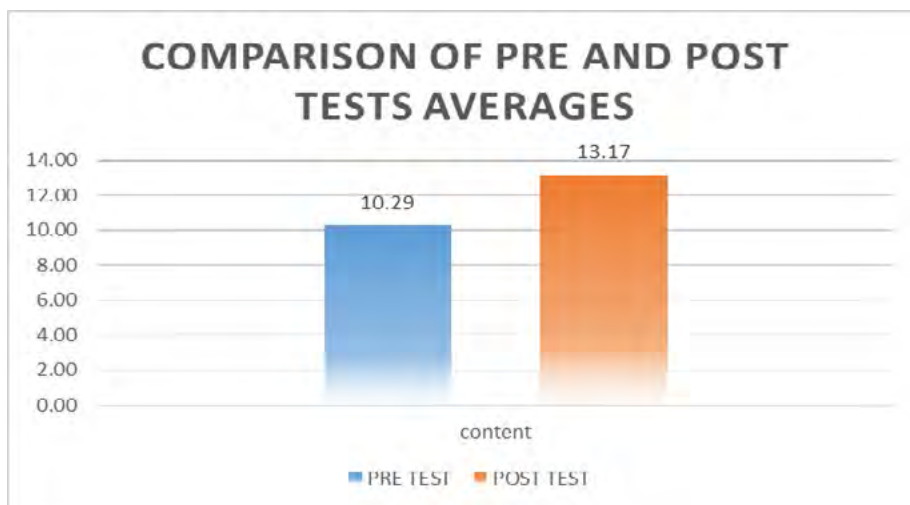
Note: This information was codified and categorized according to students’ survey response.

After revising the writing tasks (the first writing) and the post test (the last writing piece after using peer editing) there were results to analyze. The two researchers completed this activity. The first researcher was the teacher who carried out the study and the other researcher who participated in the edition and results analysis of this paper. The writing tasks were graded independently and then the researchers decided which scale should be given to each parameter.

Results and Discussion

The total number of participant ($n = 35$) wrote a paragraph describing themselves as a pretest and the post test was an e-mail about their experience as students. Both tests were graded out of 20 since the five elements stated in the rubric goes from 0 as the lowest score and 4 the highest score. Gathering all the participants' averages, the mean was obtained. With the use of a rubric, the mean of the pretest was 10.29 and the posttest mean was 13.17. Students' improvement in writing skills was increased in 2.88 points (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Students' average pretest and post test.

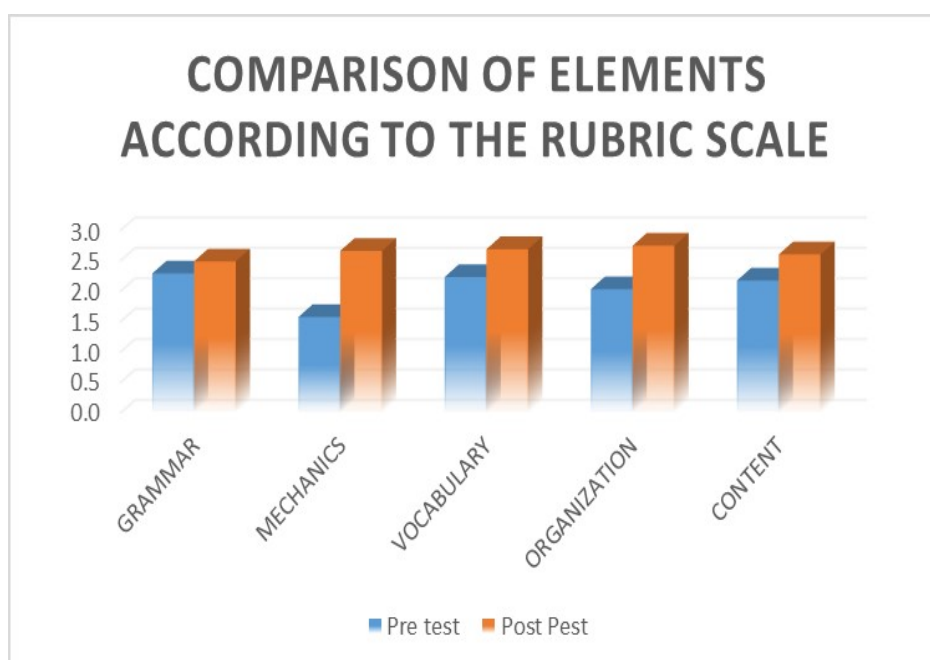


Note: This figure shows how students have improved their total scores in writing tasks after using peer reviewing technique.

It is also important to notice how each graded element was affected. Mechanic was mostly positive affected because students improved 1.1 according to the results from the pre and posttest (see Figure 2). Mechanics considers with punctuation, capitalization, spelling and the correct use of words. Vocabulary is another element, which improved since the pretest mean is 2.2 and the posttest mean is 2.7. The development of vocabulary is another important issue to mention when someone

needs to learn or acquire a new language. McCarthy (1984) argues that vocabulary must be taught in a practical way where a student understand the importance of words in context while writing or in speech. For instance, students can understand grammar, but the main objective is communication and without a wide range of coherent words, the students can not diffuse their ideas or thoughts. Paragraph organization was improved in 0.7 points with a mean of 2.7 in the posttest. In content, the pretest average was 2.0 and the posttest was 2.6 with a growth of 0.6 points. Overall, there is some increment in the scale in all the elements. However, grammar is the least affected since the pretest general average was 2.3 and the posttest total is 2.5. The rubric rating score was 0 (the lowest or does not meet standards) and 4 (the highest or exceeds standards).

Figure 2: Rubric elements comparison



Note: 0-4 rating scale elaborated by the authors

Peer review difficulties, advantages and students recommendations

Students provided their insights through a survey applied at the end of the study and the collected data was coded and summarized (see Table 3). The findings indicate that students' major problems was the lack of vocabulary knowledge. 32% of the answers from a total of 53 were related with their need to know more vocabulary since it was one of the biggest problems they found out during the writing tasks. On the other hand, 30% of students mentioned that grammar problems such as the use of the correct verb and word choice were relevant since they realized that it is useful to know grammar structures to write in a better way. Partner's ex-

expertise and time were also mentioned as drawbacks and it is represented by a 9% of the answers accordingly. Others which represents 13% relates with the need of development of metacognitive skills, organization, mechanics and coherence.

Table 3: Students’ difficulties during peer reviewing

| | f | % |
|------------------------------|----|----|
| Lack of vocabulary knowledge | 17 | 32 |
| Grammar misunderstanding | 16 | 30 |
| Partners’ expertise | 5 | 9 |
| Time | 5 | 9 |
| Organization and coherence | 3 | 6 |
| Others | 7 | 13 |

Note: this information was summarized based on students’ responses on the survey with a total of 53 items

In addition, students also noticed the advantages of this technique and they specified that cooperative learning was the most meaningful part. Thirty-six percent of students said that the peer activity helped them to know their partners better and they found that helping other partners contributed to increase motivation and friendship. They considered that they learned more and it was an advantage at the moment of receiving feedback. Students felt they learned more words because 25% percent mentioned it while 20% of students stated that noticing and correcting mistakes were also important in this activity.

Table 4: Students’ reflections on advantages of peer revision

| | f | % |
|--|----|----|
| Notice and correct mistakes | 11 | 20 |
| Acquisition of new words | 14 | 25 |
| Cooperative learning and communication improvement | 20 | 36 |
| Use of tenses | 4 | 7 |
| others | 7 | 13 |

Note: this information was summarized based on students’ responses on the survey with a total of 56 items

Students’ suggestions

Students’ recommendations are also important. Through the survey report, students provided for this study with some important insights in order to apply in further classes. Also, this suggestions will help to correct errors during writing

instructions. Students mentioned that it is essential to review and learn more vocabulary to work on this technique since students need to use words, correct tenses and vocabulary in general to write their ideas and thoughts (see Table 5). Thirty-three% of the answer from a total of 24 said that the knowledge of more vocabulary probably could help to improve this task. Moreover, they mentioned that practicing and teaching how to write organized texts with consistency is necessary to reach the aims in a writing task.

Table 5: Students' further recommendations

| | f | % |
|--------------------------------------|---|----|
| Spelling and handwriting improvement | 6 | 25 |
| Review and learn more vocabulary | 8 | 33 |
| Organization and coherence practice | 7 | 29 |
| More relevant topics | 3 | 13 |

Note: this information was summarized based on students' responses on the survey with a total of 24 replies

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, peer reviewing is indispensable to improve the students' writing abilities. Students boosted their compositions by applying language conventions. In the first writing class, students needed a lot of help to identify errors during correction regarding to the use of punctuation marks, grammatical structures, word choice and order, capitalization, and verb agreement. Nevertheless, during the process of writing and revising about different topics, students confirmed their effort towards the mastering of writing skills.

Whereas participant improvement was visible in grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, organization and content; undeniable was their improvement in organization, capitalization and punctuation pointed out in this study. At the beginning of this research, students singled out a few sentences, but after checking their errors with their partner's help, their writings had different characteristics.

Another important point to mention is that the students' perception about collaborative work changed. In students' survey emerged how the fellowship improved, and the assistance and support their peers provided encouraged them to keep practicing and feeling motivated during writing classes. Not only cooperative learning was noticeable by students; but also, acquisition of new vocabulary was important for students since they realized how they learned new words when corrections narrowed down the possibilities of lexis. Peers' suggestions on their partners' pieces of writing increased vocabulary knowledge to work better in writing tasks. This students' recommendation should be considered to understand other implications

of peer reviewing for further studies. Finally, it is important to mention that this strategy gives students control of their own learning process as it is required in today's education. Teachers and classmates' assistance and support enables students' individual growth.

It is also essential to mention the limitations that may arise during the use of this strategy. The students' lack of interest can be a limitation at the time of communicating their ideas in a written form. Additionally, the use of an electronic dictionary, which leads to translation, is also a negative point at the time of applying peer editing. Consequently, it is important to take into account students individual language level differences and motivation that eventually could affect the result and further research in this field.

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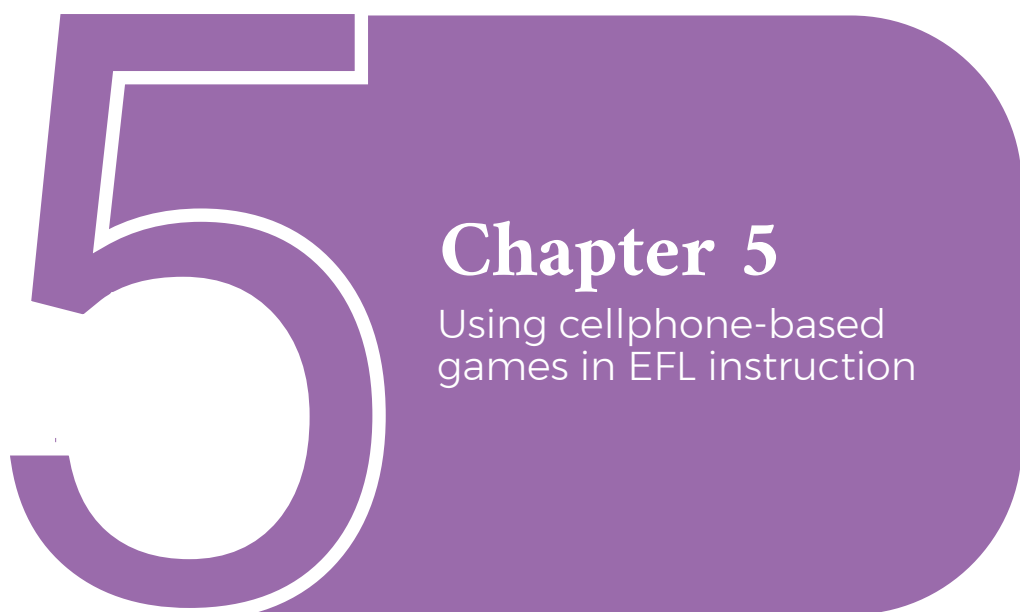
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Teaching needs an ecosystem that supports
evidence-based practice.

It will need better systems to disseminate the
results of research more widely, but also a better
understanding of research, so that teachers can be
critical consumers of evidence.

Ben Goldacre

A large purple graphic element with a rounded right side. On the left, a large white number '5' is outlined in purple. To the right of the '5', the text 'Chapter 5' is written in a white serif font, and below it, the subtitle 'Using cellphone-based games in EFL instruction' is written in a smaller white sans-serif font.

5

Chapter 5

Using cellphone-based games in EFL instruction

Using cellphone-based games in EFL instruction

Sandy T. Soto
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Using cellphone-based games in EFL instruction

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Abstract

The advent of technology has influenced education, even in the most remote parts of the world. Nowadays, it is totally normal for a person to have some technological devices such as laptops, iPads, tablets, and especially cell phones. Ecuador is not far from this reality. Moreover, in the English Language Learning Standards, the Ministry of Education suggests using technological resources in teaching (eg internet, software, computers and related devices). Given this warm welcome to the use of technology in Ecuador's English classes, as well as the number of students using cell phones in Ecuador, this chapter is intended to provide basic information on the use of cell phone games within English class. It is intended that English teachers become aware of the powerful tool that cell phones represent for their classes and encourage the practice of English through mobile phones in and out of the classroom. Throughout the document, general information on mobile games and the reason for their use in EFL classes will be provided. This information will be accompanied by the description of several game applications that have been developed for using in the EFL teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Games, cellphone-based games in EFL, technology in education, cellphone apps, mobile-based games in Ecuador, mobile-assisted language learning, cooperative learning.

Introduction

The technological advances the world has gone through since some decades ago have not only impacted the business, communication, and science fields. The advent of technology has also influenced the education field. Consequently, it is not hard to find any sort of technological tools within the educational settings, even in the most remote parts of the globe.

As a matter of fact, technology has become an important part of the life of nearly every individual in the planet. Today, technology is accessible for everyone and has become a significant tool for daily interaction and as Googin (2006) noted, it has become an international phenomenon. Hence, it is totally normal that a person owns technological devices such as laptops, iPads, tablets, and especially cellphones; more than one device in some cases. The results of the survey administered by Fundación Telefónica, in 2011, support this fact. This institution conducted a survey for the Ecuadorian Ministry of Telecommunications with the purpose of finding out about the utilization of the TV, computers, videogames, and cellphones by children and adolescents of different urban and rural schools in Ecuador. Regarding the use of cellphones, the data gathered from this survey showed that preceded by the 87% of the utilization of this technological gadget for communication purposes,

the 55% of the survey respondents stated that they used their cellphones for playing games (Bringue & Sabada, 2011).

Governments around the world are promoting the use of technology inside the classrooms by introducing technology components in their curriculum (Bidin & Ziden, 2013). Ecuador is not far from this reality. For instance, in the English Language Learning Standards established for the EFL curriculum, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (ME) noted that English teachers should “use technological resources (e.g., internet, software, computers, and related devices) to enhance language and content-area instruction for students” (Ministerio de Educación, 2012, p. 5). Furthermore, through the official agreement 70-14 issued on April 17th, 2014, the ME introduced some regulations that allow the use of cellphones in the class as long as it is for educational purposes (Ministerio de Educación, 2014).

Considering this warm welcome to the use of technology in Ecuadorian classrooms as well as the increasing number of students who own cellphones, this paper has the purpose of providing some grounding information for English language teachers about the utilization of cellphones-based games within their instruction. The authors of this work intend to make English teachers aware of the powerful tool cellphones represent for their teaching. English teachers can take advantage of the utilities these devices provide and promote the utilization of game applications to foster their students’ language practice and development by playing games on their cellphones, both inside and outside the classroom setting or as Bidin & Ziden (2013) mentioned “anytime and anyplace” (p. 721).

Throughout the paper, the authors provide general information about games and a rationale about why EFL instructors should use them. Relevant information about the utilization of cellphones as a technological tool inside the classroom as well as a teaching approach regarding the application of mobile technology is also detailed. The authors also include background information about the utility of apps in EFL instruction as well as the description of several cellphone game applications which have been meticulously selected for EFL instruction. A summary of strategies recommended for effective employment of cellphone-based games is also offered. Finally, the authors close this chapter with the specification of an overview about the limitations and applications of cellphone-based games in Ecuador.

What are games?

There are many definitions about games. For instance, among some of its dictionary meanings, the online dictionary WordReference.com defines a game as “an amusement or pastime” or “an activity in which players compete against others, involving skill, chance, or endurance and played according to a set of rules for the amusement of the players or of spectators”. Similarly, the Merriam-Webster.com defines game as “a physical or mental activity or contest that has rules and that people do for pleasure”.

In addition, Deesri (2002) stated that in educational language learning settings, games are strategies or activities used to foster the acquisition of a second language as claimed by Byrne (1995) in Deesri (2002) they are a mean to have the second language learners practice the language while playing. Moreover, by practicing their language skills through well-selected games, students are also given a chance to relax from the usual pattern of their classes (Ersoz, 2000).

Why should EFL teachers use games in their classrooms?

English teachers should consider using games in their classrooms for a variety of reasons. Games provided teachers useful tool to grab the learners' attention, reduce the level of anxiety in the students, and provide students opportunities for practicing the language in authentic situations as their main purpose is to promote students' learning and amusement at the same time (Deesri, 2002).

Moreover, Ersoz (2000) stated that games can reduce the frustration behind the difficulty of learning a new language. Games help to achieve this as they serve as a vehicle to motivate and challenge students while they are having fun using the language in real contexts and cooperating with other students. Also, Korbey (2014) revealed that games are a useful tool to benefit students with low achievement performance or those who struggle with the subject content. And more importantly, as noted by Shapiro (2014), the use of games develop the students' social and meta-cognitive skills as well as their motivation and emotions.

Cellphones in the Classroom

Just as we previously stated, having access to technology in the classroom is not far from our hands anymore. Furthermore, when talking about technology, computers are not the only devices teachers can take advantage of in their instruction as there are other types of electronic devices such as cellphones, tablets, iPads, etc., which are accessible through the students themselves (Bidin & Ziden 2013). Even though some schools have policies against the use of cellphones in the class, in most educational institutions, students keep bringing their cellphones to the school as a personal technology tool (Ormiston, 2014). In this regard, Edward (2014) mentioned that every day there are more people who own a cellphone and counting with smartphones in the class can improve the pedagogical practice.

Bidin & Ziden (2013) highlighted several positive points for cellphones. Cellphones are functional and portable. They promote privacy for learning as well as self-regulated, flexible, interactive, collaborative, fun, and life-long learning. Due to their irrefutable positive features, "the use of mobile phones and other portable devices is beginning to have an impact on how learning takes place in many disciplines and contexts, including language learning" (Kukulka-Hulme, 2009, p. 158).

In their part, Todd & Tepsuriwong (2008) stated that regardless of the impor-

tance of cellphone use in educational environments, these technological devices have not been well exploited for language learning in the classroom. In addition, as a concern to the under-use of this technological device, Ormiston (2014) proposed to deliberate about the use of cellphones for learning as the advantages these tools offer are not only for in class opportunities but also for extending the learning over the borders of the classroom or the school itself. Regarding this point, Kukulska-Hulme (2009) stated that mobile devices are a significant asset for teaching and learning as “learners who are not dependent on access to fixed computers can engage in activities that relate more closely to their current surroundings, sometimes crossing the border between formal and informal learning” (158).

Authors such as Kukulska-Hulme (2002), Waycott, Scanlon and Jones (2002), and Keegan (2003) cited in (Bidin & Ziden, 2013), on the other hand, are skeptical about the durability of the usage of mobile devices in the classrooms. These authors argue that the utilization of mobile gadgets can decrease due to the drop-in students’ excitement towards working with such tools as well as the suitability of activities performed in these devices within the content under study.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning or commonly referred as MALL, is a teaching/learning approach that deals with the use of mobile devices such as cellphones for language learning (Rodríguez-Arancón, Arús, and Calle, 2013; Miangah & Nezarat, 2012; Chinnery, 2006). This mobile-based teaching approach facilitates language learning in terms of freedom as learners are not bound to the class periods or the classroom walls to practice the language (Bidin & Ziden, 2013). For instance, learners can make use of the time to learn through their mobiles when they are doing travelling, outdoors, or any free time they have at work. Furthermore, Kukulska-Hulme et al (2011) in Rodríguez-Arancón, Arus, & Calle (2013) stated that mobile “devices can offer learning opportunities that are: spontaneous, informal, contextual, portable, ubiquitous, pervasive, and personal” (p. 1189).

Moreover, Miangah & Nezarat (2012) stated that “mobile learning can take place either within the classroom or outside it. In the former case, mobile phones possessing appropriate software are very effective in collaborative learning among small groups. Although this type of learning has nothing to do with the mobility property of such devices, it provides the learners with the opportunity of close interaction, conversation, and decision-making among the members of their group due to the specific design of the learning activity on mobile phones” (p. 311).

Miangah & Nezarat (2012) also indicated that among the novelties of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning is game-based learning which deals with the linking of “the real world of knowledge and the visual world of the game” (p. 311). Regarding second language learning, mobile learning can serve a useful tool to

teach second language and help the learners to develop their skills in areas such as “vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, listening and reading comprehension and spelling” (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012, p. 311-312).

Cellphone Apps

Apps are software that mobile devices users can install on their cellphones or any other mobile tool. These programs allow cellphone owners to perform activities in their phones such as sending emails, surfing on the web, playing, etc. Basic apps such as the contact list app and the camera normally come included in your cellphones and tablets. Otherwise, other apps such as books, games, movies, etc., can be downloaded to the devices so that the users can do the activities they enjoy doing (Verizon, 2014).

Cellphone Apps in EFL/ESL Instruction: Views and Studies

Applications produced by operating systems such as Google’s Android, Apple’s iOS, and Microsoft’s Windows 7 have become a potential technological tool for EFL instruction as they can enhance learning either in a collaborative or individual way. People learning English as a Second Language can learn anytime and anywhere by using a wide variety of applications they can download in their cellphones, tablets, etc., (Rodríguez-Arancón, Arus, & Calle, 2013).

Targeting English language learning, as stated by Cui & Wang (2008), considering that game apps are found in every cellphone, it is in the hands of programmers and game designers to elaborate meaningful game apps for educational purposes so that cellphone users can utilize them for learning. These authors also considered that the creation of educational game apps can be a great advantage as people can develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills by playing this type of games, plus, playing games is an engaging practice. Consequently, students who are learning English would feel more attracted towards the acquisition of this language by playing games. Moreover, today, there are memorization games that can be used for instructional purposes; also, “games, such as word shooting, would be especially helpful and meaningful to English learners because they can learn words while playing games.” (p.78).

While having a conversation with a student who was willing to improve his English language skills, P’Rayan (2011) recommended him to use his smartphone to improve his abilities within this language. He claimed that people who own an Android mobile have the possibility to download thousands of applications to learn and practice English. For instance, English language learners can download “apps such as dictionaries, thesauri, crossword puzzles, interactive error correction quizzes, reading comprehension exercises, pronunciation practice and news stories (texts and audio)” (Learning ESL / EFL Using Smartphones, 2011). Regarding

games, Crosswords is one of the applications he recommended as this app allows the learner to practice their language by solving crossword puzzles. In addition, in other article written by the same author, P’Ryan (2012) stated that “[Students] don’t depend on teachers or classroom teaching. They depend on technology and various English learning apps for smart phones to develop their English language skills. They are familiar with English learning apps that include grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary improvement” (English Learning Apps for Smart Phones, 2012).

Upadhyay & Upadhyay (2007) conducted mobile-based games for second language learning pilot project study in India. In their study, Indian students were provided with a match game and a word game for second language learning. The word game consisted on answering some questions about synonyms and antonyms at different complexity levels that increases as the students answer each question. By playing this mobile-based word game, students were fostered to build their vocabulary.

The match game, on the other hand, consisted on arranging sentences for proper grammar construction and on choosing the grammatically incorrect word or phrase within the sentence. This game fostered the students grammar knowledge. As a result of this study, Upadhyay & Upadhyay concluded that the use of cellphones for learning a second language was effective and easy for students. In addition, by using mobile-based games, students’ increased their level of interest towards learning a second language as well as the learning process was easy as the students could learn wherever and whenever they wanted.

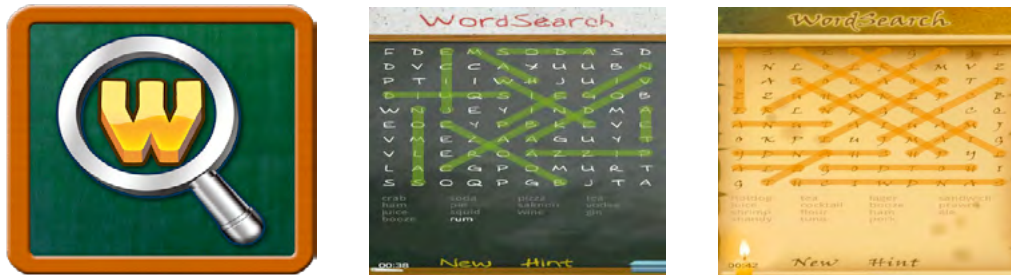
Moreover, Hockly (2013) described the results of a survey applied to two groups of “international EFL learners studying at a private language school in the UK”. This survey was conducted by The International Research Foundation in English Language Education about the use of mobile devices regarding “communicative language learning tasks” during a project where the students were enhanced to use any mobile device during class to conduct the tasks aforementioned. The results of the survey applied to the students showed that “the majority of the class enjoyed using mobile devices [...], and would like to continue to do so in the future [...]. The majority also felt that using their mobile devices had improved their English [...], and their mobile literacy [...] by familiarizing them with new apps such as Chirp, Audiobook, Woices, and new mobile-related concepts such as QR codes [...]”.

Game-Apps: Examples and Description

There are many applications that can be downloaded to mobile devices and used for English teaching/learning purposes. Below are some examples of free apps for Android mobile devices.

WordSearch Unlimited

Figure 1: Sample of Images of Word Search Unlimited



Retrieved from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.virtuesoft.wordsearch>

WordSearch Unlimited is a word puzzle game. The online mode of WordSearch Unlimited allows players “to play with other players in the real time.” Users can also “play unlimited high-quality puzzles, with themes [they] like.” Game features: “Play with other players in the online mode. Unlimited puzzles: each puzzle is unique. Three game levels. Word lists from popular categories. Word lists with foreign words. Local scoreboard. [...]. Word lists: Basic, standard English words, SAT vocabulary, GRE vocabulary, Animals, Food & Drink, Fruit & Vegetable, Family, Boy names, Girl names, Body parts, Colors, Sports, Football Players, Music & Instruments, Flowers, Famous Brands, Transport, Weapons, Weather, World countries, German words, French words, Spanish words, Italian words (Google, 2014).

Word Shaker

Figure 2: Sample of Images of Word Shaker

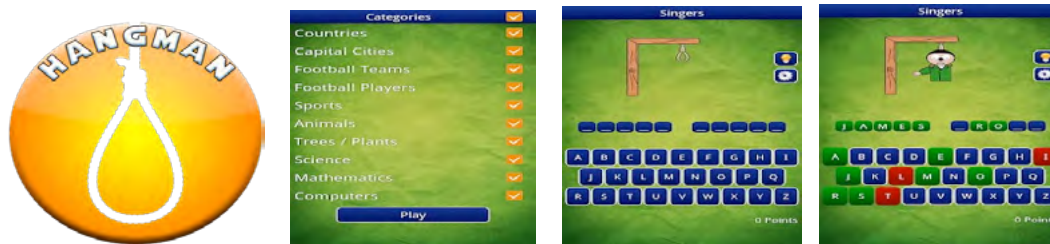


Retrieved from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.afksoft.WordShakerAndroidFree>

Word Shaker is a “word searching game with a twist”. In this game, “words don’t have to be in a straight line” The players’ “goal is to earn the most points by finding words in a grid. Each letter has a particular point value, and [the players] earn bonuses by forming longer words”. This game is connected with online leaderboards where the players can “compete with friends and people around the world” (Google, 2014).

Hangman

Figure 3: Sample of Images of Hangman

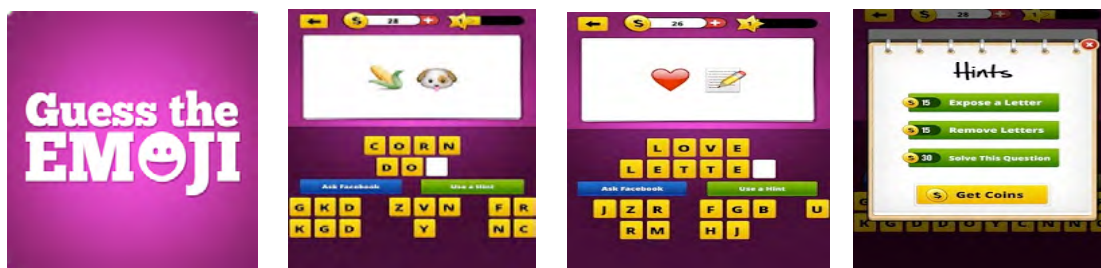


Retrieved from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ricardoalves.hangman.pt>

Hangman is a guessing game by which players can have fun by themselves or with friends. “The game consists of 1700 words divided into 20 categories” [...] the game offers [players] three different modes of play”: Normal game, against time, and 1vs 1game. In the normal game, the players guess the word and increase their score. In the against time game, the players are given time to guess the words. And, in the 1vs1 game, the players can play against a friend (Google, 2014).

Guess the Emoji

Figure 4: Sample of Images of Guess the Emoji

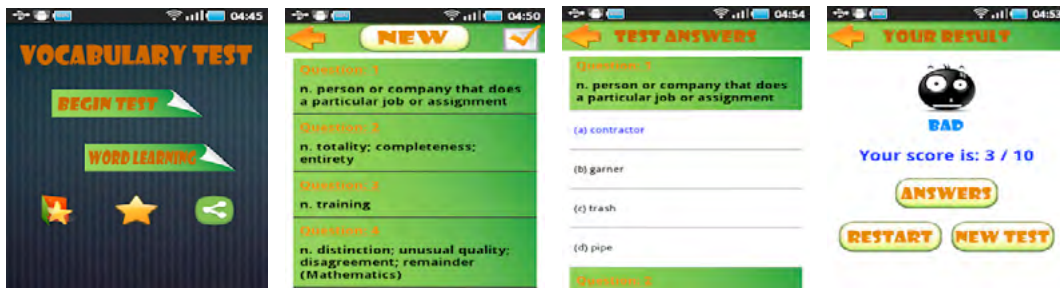


Retrieved from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.randomlogicgames.guesstheemoji>

Guess The Emoji is a friendly guessing game that tests the users’ “logic and reasoning skills to solve simple (and sometimes hard!) Emoji Puzzles!” Users are “presented with a screen displaying some emojis” and they have to guess what the emoticons are describing. Users are provided hints if they are stuck on a hard emoji question (Google, 2014).

English Vocabulary Test

Figure 5: Sample of Images of English Vocabulary Test



Retrieved from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=vocabulary.test>

English Vocabulary Test is a useful tool to test and learn English Vocabulary. This application is designed for any person. It contains “thousands of words, from basic to advanced which are divided into more than 650 tests” for players to learn English words easily. The players or users will receive a score and the correct answers of each tests after users finish it (Google, 2014).

Category Quiz

Figure 6: Sample of Images of Category Quiz

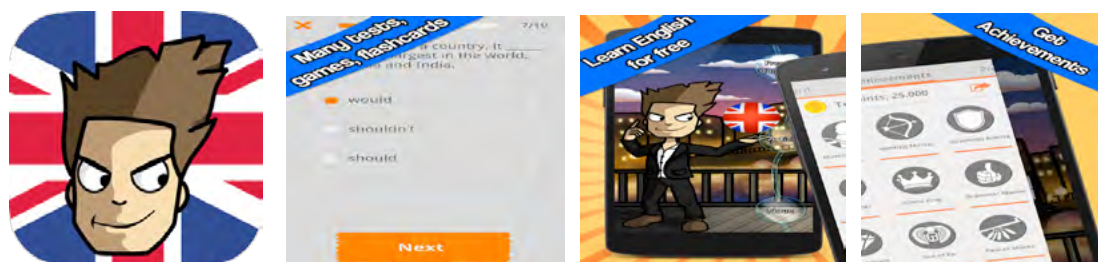


Retrieved from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=hmas.category.quiz>

Category Quiz is a trivia game. In this game, questions are to be answered by category. The questions are divided into the following categories: sports, entertainment, food and drinks, geography, science, history, arts and literature, people, music, plants, politics, religion, technology, animals, and economy. While playing, players can change the categories freely. Within this game, if the player answers all the questions of one category are answered correctly, the player receives 100 extra points. If a second category is answered correctly, 200 extra points are given to the player, and so on (Google, 2014).

Practice English Grammar-Sam

Figure 7: Sample of Images of Practice English Grammar-Sam

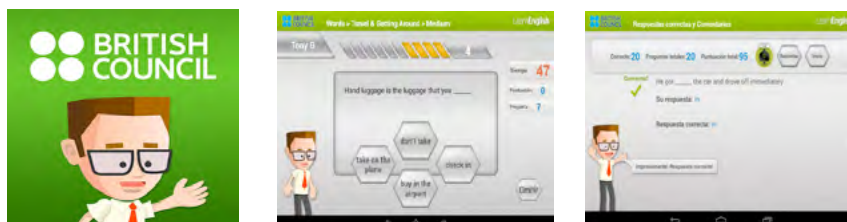


Retrieved from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.testsstore.app>

Practice English Grammar–Sam is a grammar application where the users can improve their English grammar by solving interesting grammar exercises. Users can unblock the levels and compare the results with their friends. Within the program, users accompany Sam in exciting adventures as he crosses different eras. In those adventures, users help Sam to solve English grammar challenges. In addition, users can compete with their friends or with players from other parts of the world as they learn English grammar in an entertaining way (Google, 2014).

Johnny Grammar’s Word Challenge

Figure 8: Sample of Images of Johnny Grammar’s Word Challenge



Retrieved from: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ubl.spellmaster>

Johnny Grammar’s Word Challenge is as one-minute quiz where the players have to “answer as many spelling, vocabulary and grammar questions as” they can. “Johnny Grammar’s Word Challenge is a quiz for English learners to test common vocabulary, spelling and grammar that appears in everyday English”. This game is composed by “3 quiz categories – Words, Grammar, Spelling. 3 levels - Easy, Medium, and Hard. 10 common topics – Food & Restaurants, Travel, Small Talk, Hobbies etc.” Players can: “earn badges as [they] play and share with others. Compete with others on a global leaderboard. Share [their] badges with others on a leaderboard”. This application also provides feedback on wrong answers to enhance the learning (Google, 2014).

Applications like these can be used as a mean for English learning in EFL instruction. EFL teachers can take advantage of those mobile-based games for in class activities and have the students practice vocabulary and grammar in English. For instance, students may practice and increase their vocabulary by playing WordSearch Unlimited, Word Shaker, Hangman, Guess the Emoji, English Vocabulary Test, and Category Quiz. In addition, they may practice their grammar knowledge by playing Practice English Grammar-Sam and Johnny Grammar's Word Challenge.

Cooperative Learning as a Teaching Strategy for Mobile-Based Games EFL Instruction

Cooperative learning, as suggested by Arnold (1999) and Ellen (2002), is a group activity which requires the participation and contribution of all the individuals that belong to that group. Students become responsible for their own learning and to learn from each other. Furthermore, cooperative tasks enhance learner's higher attainment since they have the opportunity of talking with peers and clarify any doubts which will help them to participate more actively in their tasks (Ellen, 2002). Consequently, since individuals receive support from their partners, they will achieve more when working in groups than making efforts individually.

As students are fostered to learn and practice English by playing games on their mobile devices such as cellphones, teachers can have the students compete with other peers in pairs or they could also compete in groups. By working on competitions, students are motivated to work cooperatively. Students can collaborate and support each other while playing the game and at the same time increase their knowledge about grammar and vocabulary in English. Consequently, having the students work in pairs or groups when playing games on their cellphones, teachers can promote cooperative learning as a learning strategy in their EFL classroom.

Discussion

Practical Applications of Mobile-Based Games in Ecuador

Mobile-based games can represent a great asset for EFL instruction in Ecuador. English language teachers can promote their students' English language learning by practicing grammar and vocabulary through cellphone game applications. Consequently, utilizing the appropriate cellphone game app could be an excellent reinforcing activity for the content being taught. Furthermore, as games represent fun, mobile-based games can be such an excellent mean to make English classes more active and engaging for EFL students.

Students who are not English fans or those who struggle with the language can find playing mobile-based games useful and attractive to improve their skills

regarding grammar and vocabulary as well as in other language skill areas. Besides, applying game apps effectively can promote students' interaction as they work in cooperative learning tasks during their instruction. Finally, EFL teachers can take advantage of this practical device and the opportunities mobile-based games offer to them through game apps to assess their students formatively.

Problems and Limitations for the Utilization of Cellphone-Based Games in Ecuador

Some of the problems or limitations that English language teachers may face regarding the use of cellphone-based games in Ecuadorian classrooms have to deal with the management and access to adequate cellphones for this purpose inside the classrooms. For instance, considering that the utilization of cellphones for educational purposes has just started to be promoted by the Ecuadorian government, teachers may not have the necessary knowledge or training about how to apply these devices in their instruction adequately.

Also, even though statistics report that Ecuadorian students have access to cellphones more and more every day, not all parents may allow their children to bring a cellphone to school. Regarding this point, it is also important to contemplate the possibility that if students are able to do so, not all their cellphones may be appropriate for downloading applications. Some students own cellphones that only have basic utilities. Although the game applications proposed here are free, another point to mention is accessibility to certain apps that may not be free. Furthermore, as most of these apps only work with Internet access, this may be a big limitation. Neither the students may have Internet access in their cellphones nor may the school be able to supply wireless internet connection for the students work in their mobile devices.

Conclusions

Today, teachers are surrounded by a variety of innovative ideas about how to give technology practical uses to improve their instruction for the benefit of their students. Moreover, the application of informational technologies has become part of today's curricula around the globe. Therefore, it is important that teachers make a wise and practical use of the technological devices they have to their disposition; either provided by the schools or from the students themselves.

Regarding technology, one of the technological gadgets EFL teachers can take advantage of in Ecuadorian school settings are cellphones. Cellphones are the most frequent technological devices students have access to in Ecuador. Bearing this in mind, plus the support that the Ecuadorian government is providing to the

use of cellphones for educational purposes in Ecuador, the application of cellphones-based games can offer a variety of opportunities for EFL instruction in Ecuadorian schools.

For instance, EFL teachers can use their creativity and imagination to make of the utilization of cellphone games apps a powerful and rich activity to support EFL students' language learning. Besides, by cooperating and collaborating among one another, students can demonstrate and scaffold their knowledge as they receive support from their peers. Finally, besides utilizing cellphone-based games for promoting an enriching, interactive, and engaging environment in EFL classes, the utilization of cellphone game apps can provide a canvas of opportunities for teachers to find out how much their students have progressed and what gaps still need to be fulfilled. In conclusion, technology is a powerful tool for education and cellphone-based games provide a practical utility for EFL teachers to help students scaffold their learning. Teachers can achieve this as by working on cellphone-based games, students have the chance to practice and to demonstrate what they have already grasped. Also, students can also demonstrate what still needs to be internalized so that teachers can take actions about it and accommodate their instruction to foster their students' English language learning success.

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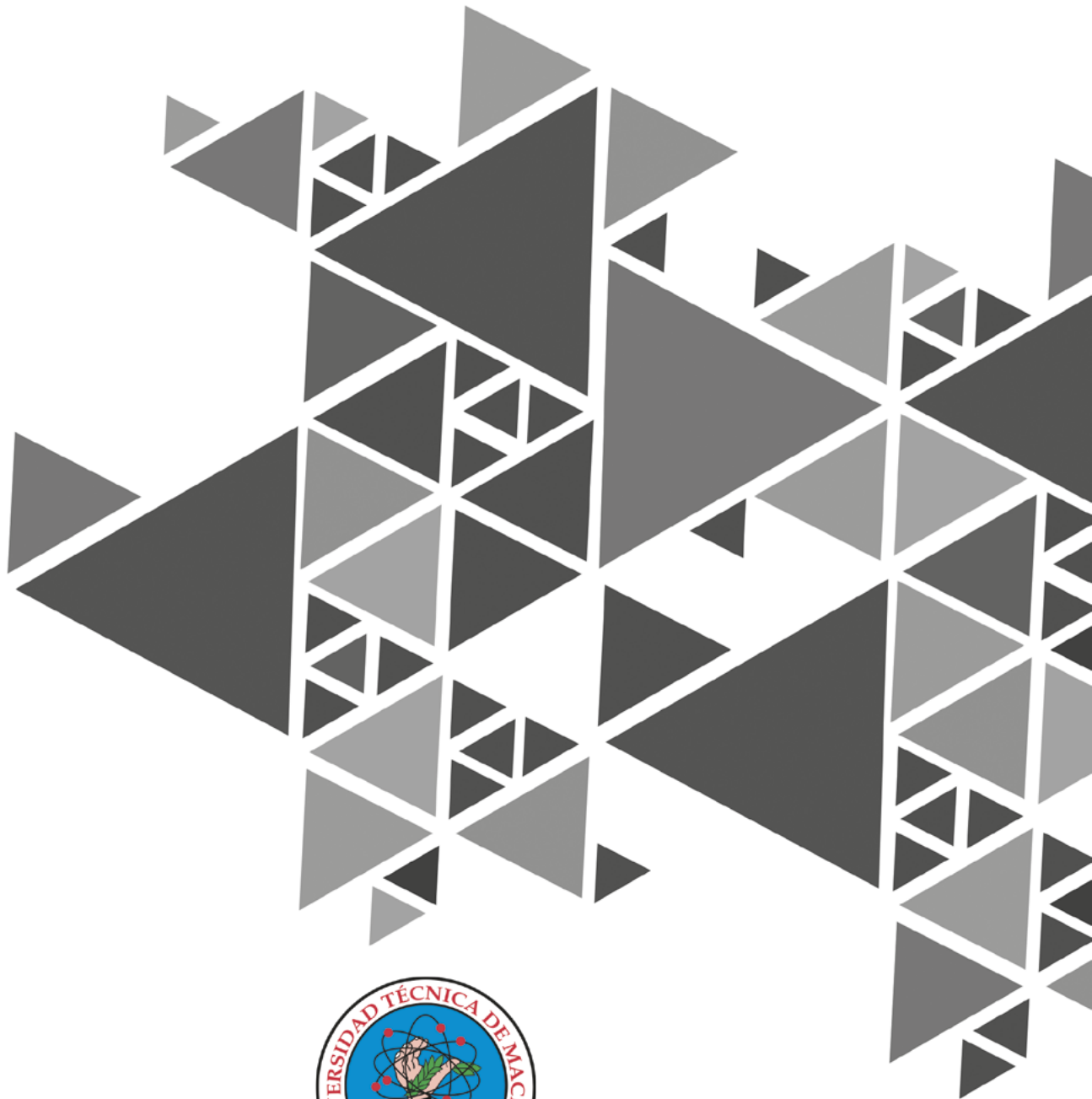
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