



Improving EFL Learners' Speaking Fluency through Authentic Oral Production

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Presented as Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Magíster en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con Mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés. CES: RPC-SO-25-N°.416-2016. Cohort 2017-2019. Guayaquil, April – 2019.

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Abstract

This article reports the development of speaking fluency through authentic oral production in a six-week action research study in a public high school in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The methodology included a pre-test and a post-test that measured quantitative aspects of student's oral speech (speed, pauses, repetitions, and corrections), a survey with closed-ended questions that collected learners' perspectives towards their own speaking fluency, and an interview that addressed students' opinions towards the innovation and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Twenty four students' audio recordings were analyzed and the results indicated that there was a significant increase of students' speaking fluency. Results also showed that student's perspectives on the innovation were positive since it raised awareness of their mistakes, helped them feel more confident, and let them practice the target language with autonomy outside the school boundaries. However, some considered that time and the lack of equipment and technological skills were issues that made the activity look less pleasant. This paper affirms that authentic oral production, facilitated by vlogging, helps students develop speaking fluency.

Keywords: speaking, fluency, authentic production, vlogging, high school level

Resumen

Este artículo trata sobre el desarrollo de fluidez oral a través de la producción de discursos auténticos en un estudio de investigación-acción de seis semanas en un colegio público de Guayaquil, Ecuador. La metodología incluyó un pre-examen y un post-examen que midió los aspectos cuantitativos del discurso oral del estudiante (rapidez, pausas, repeticiones y correcciones), una encuesta con preguntas cerradas que recogieron la percepción de los estudiantes acerca de su propia fluidez oral y una entrevista que abordó las opiniones de los estudiantes sobre la innovación y las Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación (TICs). Las grabaciones de audio de veinticuatro estudiantes fueron analizadas y los resultados indicaron que hubo un incremento significativo de su fluidez oral. Los resultados también demostraron que la opinión de los estudiantes sobre la innovación fue positiva ya que les hizo notar sus errores, les ayudó a sentirse más seguros y les permitió practicar la lengua objetivo con autonomía fuera de la escuela. Sin embargo, algunos consideraron que el tiempo, la falta de equipo apropiado y de destrezas tecnológicas fueron elementos que hicieron la actividad menos placentera. Este artículo afirma que la producción de discursos auténticos, facilitada por el vlogging, ayuda a los estudiantes a desarrollar fluidez oral.

Palabras clave: oral, fluidez, producción auténtica, vlogging, colegio

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Learning English has gained great relevance since it is the main language used among foreign language speakers. It is used in workshops, seminars, research, and other aspects of the field of education (Miftahussurur, 2018). Furthermore, English is used worldwide among people from different countries, ethnics, and social backgrounds as a mean to interact on a daily basis (Dewi, 2015; Mukminin, Ali, & Ashari, 2015). Nowadays, this perspective is not only shared by professionals and educators, but also by high school English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

Many language learners agree that the ultimate purpose of learning a language is to “develop proficiency in speaking and communicative efficiency” (Rahman & Deviyanti, 2018). This would be possible only if the educational systems provide a regulatory framework that facilitates the acquisition of speaking competence. In this regard, the Ecuadorian English Language Learning Standards establish that at the end of high school students must be able to get involved in conversations about their everyday life fluently (Ministerio de Educación, 2012).

Teachers and EFL learners experience different limitations in the Ecuadorian education system. Making connections with students' background experiences is one of the lowest parameters considered in classes (Naula, 2016). It is known that using the target language in authentic and meaningful tasks has a significant impact on language development (Richards, 2015; Swain, 2000). However, in classroom-based learning, teachers usually focus on linguistic instruction rather than on the practical use of the language (Arevalo as cited in Calle, Calle, Argudo, Moscoso, Smith, & Cabrera, 2012). In respect to this, Richards (2015) argues that a classroom environment lacks authenticity, and states that learning can happen in a scenario different from school.

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Another issue is that not every student has the same opportunity to interact. In a research study carried out in two cities of Ecuador, Briones and Ramírez (2011) found out that most of the time teachers dominate the classes with monologues, interacting only with the students with higher level of the target language. This situation prevents students with lower speaking skills from practicing English in class and developing language competence. Sari (2017) points out that learners can lack speaking skills even when their knowledge about the use of language is good (word and sentence formation, for example). The author makes a direct connection between this issue and the lack of confidence and motivation. Students who lack speaking skills feel reluctant to participate actively. This might prevent them from acquiring a foreign language due to the fear of being mocked or criticized by their classmates (Miller, 2003; Krashen, 2013). Therefore, there is a direct link between confidence and developing speaking skills.

The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has proven to be a positive feature in education, making the content more accessible to learners (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Besides, technology fosters a positive attitude on students and helps them develop critical thinking skills (Ilter, 2009). This will not only depend on the implementation of ICTs, but on how effective the teacher is when using these tools in order to encourage students' engagement.

Teachers also face challenges that may prevent some of them from using ICTs in EFL classrooms. Looking for authentic materials as well as learning how to handle hardware and software take a high extra effort (Abunowara, 2016). However, according to Solano, Cabrera, Ulehlova, and Espinoza (2017) using traditional teaching approaches, avoiding ICTs, slows down the development of communicative competence in a foreign language. The same authors explain that 9 out of 10 students agree that using technological tools has helped improve their English language proficiency.

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Youtube represents a great source of native, authentic input. Video logs or vlogs, for example, are a democratic way of communication and a way to create meaningful, enjoyable products for students (Sari, 2017). Students that make vlogs as part of their English classes, gradually gain confidence and participate more in speaking activities regardless their complexity. Safitri and Khoiriyah (2017) reviewed a series of studies and reported that only watching vlogs as a mean of input is not enough since participants consider that most vloggers' backgrounds differ from their culture; hence, the task itself fails to be authentic if students do not produce their own recordings.

Literature Review

Fluency

Different authors agree that fluency is the ability to keep a natural conversation, without many pauses, and using a small number of fillers (Fillmore, 1979; Lennon 1990). Fillmore adds that the speaker must use the language creatively being able to use metaphors and other literary resources. In addition, Lennon states that a fluent person is accurate when speaking while Richards (2009) gives more importance to ongoing communication over communicative competence. In summary, fluency is the ability to use a language naturally and effectively without many fillers and pauses.

Segalowitz (2010) makes a differentiation of three facets of fluency. Cognitive fluency involves the mental processes behind the speaker's ability to communicate. Utterance fluency relates to the observable characteristics of fluency; these are speed, breakdown, and repair. The speed is conceived as the mean of syllables pronounced, the breakdown as the number the silent pauses, filled pauses and the mean length of silent pauses, and the repair as the number of repetitions and corrections. Perceived fluency refers to the reaction of the listener towards the linguistic and nonlinguistic features of the speaker's speech. This research work focused on utterance fluency.

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Authentic production

In language acquisition, authenticity refers to the use of material taken from real contexts, intended for native-speakers, rather than specially made for language learners (Van Lier, 1996). According to Richards (2001), English instruction must be delivered in such a way that students' performances represent real world situations. In this regard, the output that students produce in class must reveal their own identity in such a way that learners will be able to use what they have learned in other contexts outside the classroom boundaries. Richards (2015) also points out that authenticity is regularly affected by different features of classroom-based learning, such as big size classrooms, time limitation, teachers' low English proficiency, and test-driven curriculum.

Swain (2000, p. 99) argues that "student's meaningful production of language [output] would ... seem to have a potentially significant role in language development". On the other hand, Krashen (1998, p. 180) claims that comprehensible output "does not make a real contribution to linguistic competence". However, authentic production is significant because, even if it does not lead to acquisition by itself, it (1) is a means by which students get input from the teacher or their partners, (2) helps learners notice their own mistakes and errors to improve production skills, and finally (3) it is the only way a teacher can assess students' learning success (Ellis, 2005).

For the research purposes, authenticity will be seen as a key characteristic of vlogging. Talking about their everyday life or topics of their interest, students have the opportunity to use the target language in a real world context. Learners, do not only develop communicative skills but they also get used to sharing their insights in English as they would in their native language.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

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Drigas and Ioannidou argue that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are all kinds of technologies that provide people the opportunity of receiving, manipulating, and sharing information (2013). According to Castaño and Cabero (2013), the use of ICTs has contributed to interaction due to the advent of mobile devices, cloud computing, and the progressive development of new software applications. Talking about language instruction, the implementation of ICTs enhances collaboration, facilitates communication, and the delivery of teacher-student feedback and among peers (Bustos & Coll, 2010). For this study, ICTs will be considered as a group of tools that enable students to use the target language outside the school boundaries, at their own pace, and provides them with multiple opportunities to assess themselves and their classmates.

Vlogging

Vlogging derives from blogging and refers to the act of recording videos of oneself discussing any topic and uploading it to a video hosting website such as Youtube (Snelson, 2015; Kirschner in Safitiri & Khoiriyah, 2017). While a blog (web-log) relates to a website with small articles, a vlog (video-log) does it to a website composed of a collection of small videos. One of the characteristics of vlogs is that vloggers can produce them in a variety of contexts and settings without the need of expensive equipment (Snelson, 2015). Besides, vlogging provides the opportunity to share and interact with different audiences regardless if their main purpose is to have fun, to improve their speaking skills, or just to connect with family and friends.

Vlogging gives students more time to organize their ideas and practice several times before obtaining a final product (Jaramillo, 2016). Furthermore, it raises learner's awareness of their own mistakes and helps them focus on how to structure their sentences when speaking in other contexts.

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This article raises the possibility of improving EFL students' speaking fluency through authentic oral production using online video hostings such as Youtube. Two questions will be answered by the end of this research: To what extent does authentic oral production improve fluency? What is the perspective of students towards authentic oral production?

Innovation

The innovation was applied to 24 participants whose English proficiency level was B1.1. The innovation was part of a lesson plan that observed backwards design principles (see Appendix A). At the end of the course, the students planned, recorded, and uploaded vlogs to Youtube.

At the beginning, the teacher included training lessons in order to familiarize the student with the innovation. Such training lessons consisted in introducing students to the main concepts of vlogging. The tasks encouraged students to develop their understanding about these concepts by combining their previous knowledge with their classmates'. The projection of samples from Youtube allowed students to have a better idea of what vlogs look like.

Once students were acquainted with the innovation, the training lessons inducted students on how to plan and perform the content of their speech. The students gathered in groups and followed instructions extracted from a website specialized in providing steps and tutorials. In this part, they did not record their performances. They only made a vlog drill in front of their classmates. There were opportunities for feedback inside the groups and among the different groups.

After the vlog drill, students planned, and recorded one preliminary version of a vlog in groups during the class hour. At this time, the teacher monitored each stage to produce a vlog. During the planning stage, the students used the computer laboratory to do their research work about a topic given by the teacher.

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Then in the recording stage, they recorded their videos outside the classroom but inside the school boundaries. This way, students could look for places where they would not be interrupted, where the illumination was appropriate, or there were not sounds that affected the recording of their videos. Students practiced and recorded their video as many times as they needed before they submitted it to the teacher.

At the end of the training lessons, students planned, recorded, and uploaded one vlog on their own. For this, they created a Youtube channel and shared its link with their partners. Since uploading a video to a hosting took a considerable amount of time and a fast Internet connection, the students had to upload their videos in the computer laboratory of the school. The next class, the teacher projected the students' videos to the class. There were chances for feedback after each video, orally and by commenting on the different Youtube channels.

After the training stage, as part of the lesson plan, each week the participants had to prepare a vlog entry related to the topics seen in class and to upload it to Youtube. These vlogs were opportunities to use the target language authentically. At the end of the lesson plan, as part of the summative assessment, students published a vlog entry giving their answer to a question that demanded them to express their opinion about the main topic of the lesson plan.

Methodology

This work was an action-research with the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. In this type of research, the teacher identifies an aspect of the teaching-learning practice that needs to be solved or improved, then collects meaningful student data in order to use it as “the basis for well-informed educational decision-making” (Mertler, 2016, p. 3). The researcher followed this process in this study.

Setting and participants

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The participants were 24 students from a public school in Guayaquil, Ecuador; only four of them were male. Their English proficiency level was B1.1 according to which learners must be able to participate in conversations about different topics of their life and the world in general (Council of Europe, 2003). They were in the 3rd course of the baccalaureate in sciences and had five periods of 40 minutes of English classes per week. They were also part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), which means they met a standard profile: inquirers, communicators, and risk takers among others (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2016).

Regarding technology use among students, all the participants had a computer at home and only one of them did not have access to the Internet. Four students did not have a smartphone and twenty three students considered that were moderately or highly skilled in their use. Twelve students accessed to the Internet mostly from their phones. Nineteen students reported that they used their phones for learning purposes and two said they never used them for school. Four students indicated that they had already uploaded videos of themselves talking about any topic in Spanish to the Internet; two of them had uploaded their videos to Youtube. Only four students were familiarized with the term vlogging.

Instruments

Quantitative Data

The students filled a demographic survey that consisted of 15 closed-ended questions adapted from Christensen and Knezek's Construct validity for the teacher's attitudes toward computers questionnaire (2009). The research used only the items that addressed student's background and added others that related to the use of hardware and applications involved in the innovation (see Appendix B). The demographic survey provided information about the sample's access to the equipment and technology needed for the innovation and their skills

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in using them. The instrument also addressed the participants' use of mobile devices for learning.

To determine to what extent authentic oral production improves fluency, the researcher applied a speaking pre-test and a post-test. The researcher considered a twenty-second extract of a speaking test that followed the International Baccalaureate's Internal Assessment oral guidelines (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015). The research measured three quantifiable aspects of utterance fluency: speed, breakdown, and repair (Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005).

The three aspects were represented by six acoustic measures; mean length of syllables, number of silent pauses, number of filled pauses, mean length of silent pauses, number of repetitions, and number of corrections. Table 1 shows how each calculation was made.

Table 1

Utterance fluency aspects, acoustic measures, and calculation

Aspect	No.	Acoustic measures	Calculation
Speed	1	Mean of syllables	Number of syllables/ spoken time
Breakdown	2	Number of silent pauses	Number of silent pauses /spoken time
	3	Number of filled pauses	Number of filled pauses / spoken time
	4	Mean length of silent pauses	Total length of silent pauses /number of silent pauses
	Repair	5	Number of repetitions
6		Number of corrections	Number of corrections/ spoken time

From "What makes speech sound fluent? The contributions of pauses, speed and repairs" by Bosker, Pinget, Quené & De Jong, 2013.

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The perception of the students towards the innovation was measured with a 12 closed-ended survey with a Likert scale which was applied before and after the implementation (see Appendix C). The items of the survey addressed the participants' opinion of their own fluency and the innovation. It was adapted from different studies on the use of ICTs for learning purposes (Anil, 2016; Charles & Issifu, 2015; MacKeogh, 2003). A Chronbach's Alpha of 0.728 indicated that the survey was internally consistent and each of its items contributed with unique information.

Qualitative data

A semi-structured interview helped the researcher get a deeper insight on students' perspectives of the innovation. It was applied to a smaller sample of six participants who were selected according to their results in the quantitative instruments. Two who had the same results in both, the pretest and posttest, two who had a moderate improvement, and the two students with the highest improvement. Their English teacher conducted the interview individually inside the educational institution in school hours.

This interview included six open-ended questions and were adapted from interviews conducted in research works that studied learners perspectives on the use of Youtube and vlogging to improve students' confidence to speak English, and the use of ICTs for learning purposes (Sari 2017; So, Shin, Wong, Seo, & Davaasuren, 2017). It was applied after the innovation (see appendix D).

Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative

To determine the effectiveness of the innovation, the researcher contrasted the results of the speaking pretest and posttest. The value of the effect size made it possible to determine the impact of authentic oral production on the development of speaking fluency.

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The researcher analyzed the perspective of students collected in the survey and described the results of items 1-4 which relate to learners' opinions towards their own fluency. The results for items 5-12 are shown in Appendix E.

Qualitative

After recording and transcribing the interviews, it was possible to obtain in depth positive and negative opinions which were organized in categories as well. This led to the identification of the students' engagement and motivation during the implementation of the innovation; how motivated, confident or reluctant they feel when participating in vlogging.

Results

The first question to answer was to what extent authentic oral production helps students improve speaking fluency.

Table 2 shows that the participants increased their speed in 21% (M= 2.44 to 2.95), and reduced the number of silent pauses in 45% (M= 0.16 to M= 0.09), reduced filled pauses in 29% (M= 0.14 to M= 0.10), reduced repetitions in 48% (M= 0.13 to M= 0.07), and reduced corrections in 34% (M= 0.07 to M= 0.04). With a confidence interval of 95%, the Sig. (P) 0.000 shows that this difference is statistically highly significant ($P < 0.001$) and is not consequence of random chance.

As Table 2 shows, the average effect size of the innovation was 1.01. This result indicates that vlogging contributed to the development of speaking fluency, considering Cohen's (1988) suggestions that > 0.8 represents a large effect. Analyzing the values of each acoustic measure independently, the innovation had a large impact on the increment of speed (0.93), the reduction of silent and filled pauses (1.5 and 0.90), and word repetition (1.57). However, there is only an intermediate effect on the results of the length of silent pauses (0.54) and corrections (0.60).

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Table 2

Pre-test and Post-test results

Aspect	Acoustic measures	PRETEST			POSTTEST			Sig. (P)	Es
		N	M	Sd	M	Sd	Md		
Speed	Mean of syllables	24	2.44	0.48	2.95	0,42	-0.52	0.000	0.93
Breakdown	Number of silent pauses	24	0.16	0.06	0.09	0,04	0.07	0.000	1.50
	Number of filled pauses	24	0.14	0.07	0,10	0.05	0.04	0.001	0.90
	Mean length of silent pauses	24	0.40	0.16	0.58	0.20	-0.18	0.000	0.54
Repair	Number of repetitions	24	0.13	0.04	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.000	1.57
	Number of corrections	24	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.000	0.60
Total		24	0.56	0.14	0.64	0.14	-0.08	0.000	1.01

Note: N= sample M= mean Sd= standard deviation Md: mean difference Sig (P):

Significance Es= effect size

The second question to answer is what the perspectives of students towards vlogging are. For this purpose, the research included a survey and an interview.

Table 3 shows that the students' general perspective of their own fluency improved from the initial stage (M=2.75) to the end of the intervention (M=3.42) in 24%, being the reduction of word repetition the highest item with a 29% and their speed the lowest one with a 17%. A *p* value of 0.000 shows that this difference did not happen by chance.

Table 3.

Descriptive statistics for students' perspectives about their speaking fluency

Items	Pre-survey		Post-survey		Md	Sig. (P)
	M	Sd	M	Sd		
1. I consider that I speak English with an appropriate speed	2.88	0.85	3.38	0.71	-0.50	<u>0.000</u>

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2. I consider that I don't make many pauses when I speak English.	2.50	0.72	3.25	0.61	-0.75	0.000
3. I consider that I don't repeat words when I speak in English.	2.58	0.97	3.33	0.57	-0.75	0.000
4. I consider that I don't reformulate sentences constantly when I speak in English.	3.04	0.75	3.71	0.88	-0.67	0.000
	Pre-survey		Post-survey			
Total	2.75	0.82	3.42	0.69	-0.67	0.000

Note: M= mean Sd= standard deviation Md: mean difference Sig (P): Significance

The open-ended interview led to the identification of twenty positive opinions regarding the innovation. The researcher divided them into 5 categories: speaking skills, affective, technology, timing, and autonomy. The opinions are detailed in table 4.

Table 4

Students' positive opinions about the innovation

Aspects	Categories	Total
Speaking skills	I think that now I speak faster than before (s2 and s4)	2
	I think that I don't repeat words as I did before. (s1, s2, and s5)	3
	I raised awareness of my mistakes by rewatching the videos. (s2)	1
Affective	I felt comfortable doing the activity (s1 and s5)	2
	I eventually felt more confident when speaking (s3)	1
	Talking about real life issues made the activity more meaningful to me (s4 and s6)	2
Technology	Using new technologies helps me to learn better. (s1 and s5)	2
	Vlogging combines technology I am familiar with (S1 and s4)	2
Timing	I liked that I had enough time to prepare my speech before I recorded the video. (s4)	1
Autonomy	I can practice my speaking skills outside school. (s1 and s4)	2
	I can use other vloggers' videos on Youtube as a guide. (s5)	1
	I can do it at any place and at any time before the submitting deadline. (s2)	1

In spite of the positive opinions of the innovation, some students also reported negative perspectives about it. Regarding the effect of vlogging on fluency, one student stated not having seen a big improvement since the initial stage. Two students affirmed that they felt embarrassed of being watched online, one stated that being aware of committing mistakes all the time was an issue, and another student stated feeling anxiety. Students also mentioned three negative aspects about the use of ICTs; the extra effort that it takes to learn how to use a new technology, the lack of appropriate equipment, and the lack of fast internet connection. Finally, three students affirmed that the whole process of vlogging also requires a lot of time, starting from the preparation of the topic, recording the video (including the several discarded attempts), and uploading it to the Internet.

Discussion

The study revealed that, after six weeks of implementation, the authentic oral production contributed to the development of speaking fluency. The highest impact the innovation had on fluency is on speed since students increased the number of syllables they pronounce in a given time. Besides, though in a discreet grade, students also decreased the number of silent and filled pauses they made. The study also showed that after different sessions of vlogging, students decreased the number of corrections. The multiple video recording sessions made them more aware of their own mistakes when speaking. According to Ellis (2005), noticing one's mistakes and errors helps learners improve their production skills.

An unusual finding was that even though students reduced the number of silent and filled pauses, the mean length of silent pauses increased. It is possible that during the intervention, students preferred to elongate the moments of silence as a strategy to avoid using fillers or repeating words. This would have given students more time to think and

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make sure of what they were going to say before speaking again. A low number of corrections and fillers are characteristics of a fluent conversation (Fillmore, 1979; Lennon 1990).

Students who felt comfortable with vlogging also noticed that their speaking fluency increased after its implementation. These results agree with Solano, Cabrera, Ulehlova, and Espinoza's (2017) studies which affirm that technological tools help students improve English language proficiency. On the other hand, the student that affirmed not having improved in fluency also reported feeling embarrassed during the activity. This is highly related to Miller (2003) and Krashen's (2013) ideas that the fear of being mocked and lack of confidence have a negative impact on the development of speaking skills.

The findings also indicate that students considered that vlogging demanded them to use the target language authentically making the activity more meaningful than others. Swain explains that meaningful output has the potential to help students develop a foreign language (2000).

The use of ICTs proved to be positive since it made information more accessible and fostered learner's autonomy. The findings demonstrated that students found positive how easy they could access to content for learning purposes such as examples and tutorials. Students also reported as positive the possibility to work at any time and at any place. This agrees with Richard's (2016) statement that students make progress in their spoken English when they are provided with opportunities to use it outside the classroom boundaries.

Conclusions

The aims of this research were to determine if authentic oral production contributes to the development of speaking fluency and to describe the students' perspectives regarding this innovation. Teachers, in their role as facilitators, have the responsibility to encourage learners to become autonomous learners and new technologies open up a world of

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possibilities to learn independently. Authentic oral production provides students the opportunity to use the target language at their own pace, become more aware of their performance constantly, and take actions in order to improve their speech. Findings in this study state that this innovation helps students improve speaking fluency in terms of speed, and reduction of pauses, word repetition and corrections.

This research work may open new horizons for the use of ICTs to create authentic output in EFL instruction in public schools. Findings show that students who get involved in vlogging show interest and enthusiasm because they consider such tasks as authentic and meaningful. Besides, vlogging does not require expensive equipment or software that the majority of students are not familiar with.

However, the lack of technology management skills and proper equipment can make vlogging look more difficult and affect students emotionally due to their concern to accomplish the assignments on time. Teachers who implement vlogging, just as any other innovation that includes ICTs, should consider these issues and make sure that students are capable to do the different activities. Programmed schedules to use the school computer labs (when available) could be a solution for those students who have limitations regarding technology at home.

Another issue is the stress that students may feel toward being watched on video hosting sites like Youtube or social networks like Facebook. The study revealed that it could affect the perspective of their own performance.

Limitations

The present study, as well as all research studies, had certain limitations. The present research work was limited in sample (N=24), and a larger group would lead to more robust findings. This study didn't include the data of a control group. If this information were available, it would be possible and determinate to what extent vlogging contributes to

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improve fluency in a group compared to another in which the innovation hasn't been implemented. The participants were all students of the IBDP, which means they were expected to have a standard profile. This fact increased the chances to find students more motivated to participate actively in this course compared to an average classroom. This study focused on three aspects of fluency; speed, breakdown, and corrections, following Filmore's (1979) and partially Lennon's (1990) criteria. It does not address other facets that could indicate speaking skills competence such as accuracy or comprehension.

Technology represented an issue when students were not familiar with software needed to record, edit, and upload videos. The effort and time that it took to learn how to use new technology made the activity look less pleasant. The situation got even worse when the equipment they had is was not suitable for the innovation. Also, some students considered that the time they spent recording each video until they felt satisfied with their product made the activity more difficult than others.

Recommendations

A study with a larger number of participants would offer a more accurate perspective of how authentic oral production contributes to the development of speaking fluency. Also, since the participants had specific profile specifications, a study conducted in a more heterogeneous group would increase the confidence to generalize findings to all the population. A research work with instruments that measure other aspects of speaking would give an idea of the impact of the innovation on speaking skills competence in general.

An in-depth demographic study that contrasts the students' access to technology, and their performance before and after the innovation would offer a clear view of how the lack of technology affects the development of English language skills. Furthermore, future research about the positive and negative feelings that students experience during the activity

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would provide a better understanding of the effects of vlogging on the emotional facet of learners.

Future research regarding how well equipped public schools are in terms of ICTs and how skilled are students using these would offer a more accurate perspective of to what extent the Ecuadorian system is prepared for this kind of innovations. It would also provide valuable information to develop plans that in the long run help schools create the conditions to seize the opportunities that ICTs could provide to their students.

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Appendix A

Lesson Plan

Institution:	Veintiocho de Mayo
Year of study:	3rd Bacallaureate
Student description: (include English Level)	Students are teenagers, ages 15-17. Most of them have an intermediate English level (B1.1 CEFR standards). Boys and girls; only 4 boys. They come from different sectors of the city, mainly the north of Guayaquil. Most of them are mestizos with a minority of Afro-Ecuadorian and native Ecuadorians
Professor:	Jairo López
Unit title:	“It’s a Brave New World”
Weeks:	5 weeks
Hours:	24 periods

I. Transfer Goal (Stage 1)

Standards the unit will work with:

Speaking production B1: Sustain a straightforward description of a subject or a variety of matters within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domains rather fluently, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.

Speaking interaction B1: Exchange, check, and confirm information to deal with less routine situations and explain why a problem has occurred. Enter unprepared into conversations on topics that are familiar, of interest, or pertinent to everyday life within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domain.

Goal:

I want my students to learn to plan, record and upload vlogs to video hosting platforms so that, in the long run and on their own, they can share their ideas and defend their points of view about real life issues fluently in the target language.

The standards of the unit are:

Breakdown of transfer goal

A. If we see and hear them do this, they CAN transfer this learning.	B. If we see and hear them do this, then they CANNOT (yet) transfer:	C. What I will commit to doing differently in my classroom to ensure my results look like Column A.
Create and plan viable arguments and support their claims clearly	Make repetitive, vague, and ambiguous statements.	Provide tasks that encourage students to raise awareness on real-life topics and share their ideas with their partners.
Incorporate new technologies to share their ideas on video hosting platforms.	Not skilled at using new technologies to share their ideas online through vlogs.	Provide students with training in vlogging and with tasks that demand them to create them on their own.

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Speak fluently with an appropriate speed.	Speak making many pauses, repeating words and reformulating sentences most of the time.	Provide students with multiple opportunities to practice and record vlogs.
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II. Summative Performance Assessment Task (Stage 2)

Goal	Share their position regarding a real-life issue and support their ideas
Role	They are vloggers
Audience	Their classmates, other students of their school, and Youtube subscribers.
Situation	They will have to create a vlog answering the question: Has technology improved our lives? Their choices are either to agree or disagree and explain their reasons.
Performance	They will create an individual video presentation explaining the positive and negative effects that the development of technology has had in their lives. Then they will submit the video to their Youtube channel so their classmates and followers can watch it online.
Standards	<p>Their vlog should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish their position about the given question as well as negative and positive effects of technology on their lives in a three to five minute video. - Contain accurate and reliable information. - Have an appropriate speed, without many pauses, and without repeating words or reformulating sentences most of the time.

III. Knowledge and skills the students need to succeed in the assessment. (Stage 1)

What students will need to know	The skills students will need to be able to do
They will need to know what to include in an oral presentation.	They will need to be plan and perform an oral presentation.
They will need to know a range of vocabulary, expressions and connectors.	They will need to be able to communicate clearly and fluently.
They will need to know new technologies such as smartphones and Youtube.	They will need to be able to use software in order to record and upload videos on the Internet.

IV. Essential Questions (Stage 1)

Essential questions support the transfer goal, signal inquiry, guide instruction, and can be asked over and over throughout the unit without reaching a final answer.
1. What is the impact of vlogging and Youtube influencers on teenagers?
2. How does new technologies improve people’s lives in today’s world?

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V. Learning Activities

Transfer goal:

I want my students to learn to plan, record and upload a vlogs to video hosting platforms so that, in the long run and on their own, they can share their ideas and defend their points of view about real life issues fluently in the target language.

Abbreviated Performance Task:

You are a speaker in a Teen Talk at your school. Create a video presentation explaining your classmates your position regarding the following question: Has technology improved our lives? Your choices are either to agree or disagree. Make sure to support your claim with positive and negative aspects of technology. Your talk must last 5-10 minutes, include appropriate visuals, be organized, and contain accurate and reliable information.

Learning Activities (from student's perspective)	Intention	A	M	T
<p>Week 1 – (5 periods)</p> <p>Day 1 (2 periods) (80 minutes) The students gather in groups and each group receives sticky notes and a piece of paper with only 2 words on it; youtuber and vlogger. They discuss about those words and their differences. Then they stick their definitions on a wall with two columns, one for each word. They do not need to write their names. (10 minutes) The teacher chooses a couple notes and read them to their whole class and students discuss which ones are right or wrong. (5 minutes) Students watch 2 videos on Youtube. One by with regular content by a youtuber, and another one by a vlogger. (7 minutes) 1. Life better than the past by Jose Luis Villalobos (vlog) 2. Past vs Present by Kawkawkins (regular content) Then the students discuss whether their answers were right or wrong. They try to elaborate their own concepts about a youtuber and a vlogger. They also recall other examples of youtubers and vloggers they already know. They share these findings with their classmates. (15 minutes) Students read “Life of a Youtuber” by Nicola Prentis. And they work on a worksheet. Homework: Students read at home “How to make a great first vlog” in Wikihow. This information will be useful for the next class.</p> <p>Day 2 (2 periods) (80 minutes) Recap of concepts seen in the previous class. Youtube, youtuber, vlog, vlogging, and vlogger. (5 minutes) Students make groups. They discuss the homework reading “How to make a great first vlog”. (5 minutes) Students create a fake Youtube channel: name, type of content, target. They must prepare a vlog drill introducing the channel in class. It will not be recorded. It must not last more than 3 minutes. (30 minutes) Students present their vlog drill to the class. In order to create a vlog-like setting, they can use their cellphones to play background music, make backgrounds with cardboard. After each presentation, the teacher and the rest of the students give oral feedback to the group. This will help them enhance their strengths and work on their weaknesses. (40 minutes)</p>	<p>Hook Initiating</p> <p>Initiating</p> <p>Developing</p> <p>Hook Review</p> <p>Initiating</p> <p>Formative assessment</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p></p> <p>X</p> <p></p> <p>X</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>X</p>

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<p>Day 3 (1 period) (40 minutes)</p> <p>Students watch a video “The dangers of vlogging by Niftyeee” (Youtube Channel) 01:20 – 03:15. They discuss the advices that the author gives to people who vlog every day. (7 minutes) Students make groups and each group receives reading material regarding how to vlog safely. They must discuss the content and prepare a brief explanation of what the main ideas. They must focus on the dangers of vlogging and what to do in order to do it responsibly. (20 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to vlog safely in the city 2. How to protect your info and be safe as a Youtuber 3. Staying safe on Youtube 4. How to keep your Youtube channel secure 5. Five tips for vlogging responsibly in Qatar 6. The debate: Would you let your child vlog? <p>Students share their ideas with the class and they must come up with a set of rules of tips they should follow in order to vlog safely and avoid dangerous situations. (17 minutes)</p>	<p>Hook Initiating</p> <p>Developing</p> <p>Formative Assessment</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>Week 2 – (4 periods)</p> <p>Day 4 (2 periods) (80 minutes)</p> <p>Recap of the previous class (5 minutes)</p> <p>Students make pairs prepare a vlog entry. They do the planning and research work in the computer lab. They can ask their partners or their teacher for assistance. (35 minutes) Students record their first vlog at school. They can choose any location (40 minutes). Students submit their vlog to their teacher.</p>	<p>Hook Review</p> <p>Formative Assessment</p>			<p>X</p>
<p>Day 5 (2 periods) (80 minutes)</p> <p>Recap of previous class. Students answer questions like: Did you like it? Was it difficult? (5 minutes)</p> <p>Vlogs projection in the computer lab. Students project their vlogs and watch their partner’s work. They discuss what they like or what could be improved in their partners’ vlogs. Then they comment on their partners videos on Youtube. (60 minutes) Students make pairs again and answer the following questions (5 minutes): Did you feel more confident during this task than during the previous one in groups? Did you see any improvements in this vlog compared to the first task in groups? Do you think you are ready to plan and create a vlog on your own? Explain. The students share their thoughts with their classmates. (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Hook Review</p> <p>Formative assessment</p> <p>Closure</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	

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<p>Day 10 (1 period) (40 minutes)</p> <p>1. Recap of first world problems (<i>5 minutes</i>)</p> <p>2. The teacher shows a compilation video of grandpa Abe Simpsons from The Simpsons complaining on modern times. The teacher models examples about himself. Example: “In the past, The Simpsons used to be funny, but now it’s kind of boring”. (<i>10 minutes</i>)</p> <p>3. Then the students are given time to discuss in pairs about something that has changed and they don’t like anymore. The teacher gives examples of topics; sports, TV series, movies, artists, music, the school, celebrations, etc. (<i>5 minutes</i>)</p> <p>4. Students write as many complaints as they can on sticky notes and paste them on the wall. Then the teacher asks students to pick a sticky note different from theirs. (<i>5 minutes</i>)</p> <p>5. Once they are back on their seat, volunteers read the “stolen” sticky note and try to guess to whom that complaint belongs. The person must answer if that’s correct. If so, he or she has to give a more elaborated answer about his or her complaint. (<i>5 minutes</i>)</p> <p>6. Insight reflection: Write about a specific aspect in your life that used to be different. It might have changed for better or for worse. Feel free to read it to the class, paste it on the classroom wall, or just keep it for yourself. (<i>10 minutes</i>)</p> <p>7. Vlog entry: At home, create a 2 minute vlog entry answering the following: You might have listened to your parents or grandparents say “things in the past were better”. Why do you think people believe that old times were better than today?</p>	<p>Hook Review</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p>Day 11 (1 period) (40 minutes)</p> <p>1. Students make groups and are given the prompt: Has technology improved our lives? The have to decide whether the changes in this aspect has or hasn’t improved their lives, prepare content that supports their ideas with information from reliable sources, and create a vlog entry. During this time, the students will be assigned a computer in the English laboratory to do their research work to support their opinion. (40 minutes)</p> <p>During the rest of the week, and the weekend, the students will create a vlog entry and upload it to their Youtube channel. They will have to prepare themselves to show their entry to students from other courses in the Computer laboratory.</p>	<p>Initiating Developing</p> <p>Developing</p> <p>Formative Assessment</p> <p>Formative Assessment</p>		<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>
<p>Week 5 – (2 periods)</p> <p>Day 12-13 (3 periods 160 minutes)</p> <p>Students will project their videos in the Computer laboratory. The audience will be their classmates from other courses of the IB program. These students will be encouraged to create Youtube accounts before the projection date. There will be 6 different sessions in 2 days. In each session, groups of 20 students will watch 4 vlog</p>	<p>Summative Assessment</p>			<p>X</p>

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<p>entries and these students will be able to leave comments on Youtube or on postits (in case they do not have a Youtube account yet).</p> <p>Day 14 (1 period) (40 minutes)</p> <p>Students reflect on what worked well and what didn't work in their performance during the presentations. Then they propose solutions to make things work more effectively a next time.</p>	<p>Closure</p>		<p>X</p>	
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Learning process: A = Acquisition, M = Meaning Making, T = Transfer

Intention: Hook, **formative assessment**, initiating, developing, review, closure, **research**, other.

Indicate Week 1, 2, etc. and number of hours.

VI. On-going Self-Assessment

<p>As I reflect on student learning, what will I do if my plan is not yielding my expected results?</p> <p>I've got used to applying insight activities by the end of a topic where the basic questions are; What did you learn? What did you like the most? What did you dislike? Or how could you improve it? This has helped me a lot to know how engaged my students feel or what they have found challenging or useless. In case I notice a pattern that highlights a possible issue I try to look for new ways to address that issue or ask myself if it is really necessary. Now, If I noticed something while things are going on in the middle or the beginning of the plan, I would ask students to make groups and work together on the problem, then we would look for answers altogether. Sometimes the problem is that students still do not feel confident enough and need more practice before they get into the elaboration part. In that case, I would offer simpler versions of the task as a scaffolding and increase the level of difficulty as they get better on it</p>
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This unit design process was adapted from the Guillot Design Process worksheet (2017) *Design from Your Goals* based on Wiggins-McTighe Backward Design.

Appendix B

Demographic survey

Code: _____

a. Nationality (*Nacionalidad*) _____

b. Sex (*Sexo*) Male (*Masculino*) () Female (*Femenino*) ()

c. Age (*Edad*): ()

d. Ethnic (*Etnia*)

White (*Blanco*) () Afro-Ecuadorian (*Afroecuatoriano*) () Mestizo (*Mestizo*) ()

Native Ecuadorian (*Nativo ecuatoriano*) () Other (*Otro*) (): _____

e. Type of school (*Tipo de institución*):

Public (*Pública*) () Private (*Privada*) () Fiscomisional (*Co-funded*) ()

f. Grade (*Curso*)

1st Baccalaureate (*1ero Bachillerato*) ()

2nd Baccalaureate (*2do Bachillerato*) ()

3rd Baccalaureate (*3ero Bachillerato*) ()

1. Number of class-periods per week (*Número de periodos de clase por semana*): _____

2. Do you have a computer at home? (*¿Tiene computadora en casa?*)

Yes (*Sí*) () No (*No*) ()

3. Do you have access to the Internet at home? (*¿Tiene acceso a internet en casa?*)

Yes (*Sí*) () No (*No*) ()

4. How many hours a week do you use a computer (and/or the Internet) at home? (*¿Cuántas horas a la semana usa generalmente una computadora (y/o la Internet) en casa?*)

_____ I don't use a computer (*No uso computadora*)

_____ 1 hour (*1 hora*)

_____ 2-3 hours (*2-3 horas*)

_____ 4-7 hours (*4-7 horas*)

_____ 8-15 hours (*8-15 horas*)

_____ 16-30 hours (*16-30 horas*)

_____ more than 30 hours (*más de 30 horas*)

5. Do you have a smartphone? (*¿Tiene un smartphone?*)

Yes (*Sí*) () No (*No*) ()

6. How do you consider your skills when using a smatphone? (*Cómo consideraría su destreza usando un smatphone?*)

High (*Alta*) () Intermediate (*Media*) () Low (*Baja*) ()

7. Do you have access to portable Internet? (any kind of plan) (*¿Tiene acceso a internet portable? (plan de datos o prepago)*)

Yes (*Sí*) () No (*No*) ()

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8. How many hours a week do you use a smartphone? (*Cuántas horas a la semana usa un smartphone?*)

- I don't use a smartphone (*No uso un smartphone*)
 1 hour (*1 hora*)
 2-3 hours (*2-3 horas*)
 4-7 hours (*4-7 horas*)
 8-15 hours (*8-15 horas*)
 16-30 hours (*16-30 horas*)
 more than 30 hours (*más de 30 horas*)

9. How do you mostly access the Internet? (*¿Cómo accede a internet mayormente?*)

- PC or laptop (*Pc o computador portátil*) () Smartphone ()
Cyber Café (*Cyber*) () Other (*Otro*) () _____

10. How often do you use a smartphone for learning purposes? (*¿Con qué frecuencia usa un smartphone con fines de aprendizaje?*)

- Every day (*Diariamente*) Once a week (*Una vez a la semana*) Una vez al mes (*Once a month*) Nunca (*Never*)

11. How often do you access Youtube per week? (*¿Qué tan a menudo accede a Youtube a la semana?*)

- I don't access to Youtube (*No accedo a Youtube*)
 1 hour (*1 hora*)
 2-3 hours (*2-3 horas*)
 4-7 hours (*4-7 horas*)
 8-15 hours (*8-15 horas*)
 16-30 hours (*16-30 horas*)
 more than 30 hours (*más de 30 horas*)

12. How often do you access social networks per week? (*¿Qué tan a menudo accede a redes sociales a la semana?*)

- I don't access to social networks (*No accedo a redes sociales*)
 1 hour (*1 hora*)
 2-3 hours (*2-3 horas*)
 4-7 hours (*4-7 horas*)
 8-15 hours (*8-15 horas*)
 16-30 hours (*16-30 horas*)
 more than 30 hours (*más de 30 horas*)

13. Have you ever uploaded a video of yourself talking about any topic to the social networks?

(*¿Alguna vez ha subido un video suyo hablando de cualquier tema a redes sociales?*)

- Yes (*Sí*) () No (*No*) ()

14. Have you ever uploaded a video of yourself talking about any topic to Youtube or other video hosting platforms? (*¿Alguna vez ha subido un video suyo hablando de cualquier tema a Youtube u otras plataformas para alojar videos?*)

- Yes (*Sí*) () No (*No*) ()

15. Are you familiar with vlogging? (*¿Está familiarizado con el vlogging?*)

- Yes (*Sí*) () No (*No*) ()

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This survey has been adapted from Christensen and Knezek's *Construct validity for the teacher's attitudes toward computers questionnaire (2009)*. The researcher has used only those items that address student's background and has added others that relate to the use of smartphones and Youtube, and social networks for vlogging.

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Appendix C

Survey for students' perspectives of their own fluency and ICTs

	Strongly agree (Totalmente de acuerdo)	Agree (De acuerdo)	Indifferent (Indiferente)	Disagree (En desacuerdo)	Strongly disagree (Totalmente en desacuerdo)
1. I consider that I speak English with an appropriate speed (1. Considero que hablo inglés a una velocidad apropiada.)					
2. I consider that I don't make many pauses when I speak English. (2. Considero que no hago muchas pausas cuando hablo en inglés.)					
3. I consider that I don't repeat words when I speak in English. (3. Considero que no repito palabras cuando hablo en inglés.)					
4. I consider that I don't reformulate sentences constantly when I speak in English. (4. Considero que no reformulo las oraciones constantemente cuando hablo en inglés.)					
5. I enjoy working with ICTs* (5. Disfruto trabajar con TICs.)					
6. I generally feel ok working with something new with ICTs (6. Generalmente me siento bien al trabajar con algo nuevo en TICs.)					
7. I have a positive attitude towards using ICTs (7. Tengo una actitud positiva hacia el uso de TICs)					
8. I find it easier to learn with ICTs (8. Creo que es más fácil aprender con TICs.)					
9. I feel fairly confident when working with ICTs (9. Me siento muy seguro cuando trabajo con TICs.)					
10. I think ICTs give me the opportunity to learn more independently. (10. Creo que las TICs me dan la oportunidad de aprender más independientemente.)					

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11. I prefer to learn with methods that include the use of ICTs. <i>(11. Prefiero aprender con métodos que incluyan el uso de TICs)</i>					
12. I think that ICTs can help me develop English communication skills <i>(12. Creo que las TICs pueden ayudarme a desarrollar destrezas de comunicación.)</i>					

This questionnaire has been adapted from MacKeogh (2003, p. 53-54) Student perceptions of the use of ICTs in European education: Report of a survey, Charles and Issifu (2015, p. 137-138) Innovation in education: Students' perceptions of implementing ICT in learning in second-cycle institutions in Ghana, and Anil (2016, p. 129-143). It has the purpose to obtain quantitative data of students' perceptions towards ICTs and their use for learning English.

Appendix D

Semi-structured interview: students' perception towards innovation

Interview Questionnaire

1. Do you think that vlogging has helped you to improve your English skills? Which ones?
3. How do you think of vlogging has helped you to improve your English skills?
2. Did you face any difficulties when vlogging? Which ones?
4. What did you like the most about vlogging?
5. What didn't you like about vlogging?
6. Would you like to have more speaking activities that involve the latest technology as a part of the activities? Explain your answer

This interview has been adapted from studies made by Soa, Shin, Wong, Seoa and Davaasuren (2017) and Sari (2017) on learners' perspectives of the use of ICTs such as mobiles, vlogs, and Youtube channels to improve students' English speaking skills.

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Appendix E

Descriptive statistics for students' perspectives about ICTs

Aspect	Items	Pre-survey			Post-survey			Sig. (P)
		N	M	Sd	M	Sd	Md	
Attitude	5. I enjoy working with ICTs	24	3,92	0,88	4,42	0,50	-0,50	0,005
	6. I generally feel ok trying something new with ICTs.	24	4,08	0,72	4,33	0,64	-0,25	0,011
	7. I have a positive attitude towards using ICTs	24	4,08	0,88	4,50	0,59	-0,42	0,005
Confidence	8. I find it easier to learn with ICTs	24	3,96	1,08	4,46	0,72	-0,50	0,01
	9. I feel fairly confident when working with ICTs	24	3,88	0,85	4,54	0,59	-0,66	0,000
	10. I think ICTs give me the opportunity to learn more independently	24	4,12	0,99	4,5	0,66	-0,4	0,004
Learning	11. I prefer to learn with methods that include the use of ICTs.	24	3,67	1,17	4,04	0,96	-0,4	0,017
	12. I think that ICTs can help me develop English communication skills	24	4,33	0,82	4,63	0,5	-0,3	0,032

Note: N= sample M= mean Sd= standard deviation Md: mean difference Sig (P):

Significance