Tiktok/Flipgrid for Foreign Language Learning in Higher Education: A Case Study

Tiktok y Flipgrid para el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en la educación superior. un estudio de caso

Tiktok et Flipgrid pour apprendre une langue étrangère à l'éducation supérieure : une étude de cas

Tiktok e Flipgrid para a aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira no ensino superior: um estudo de caso

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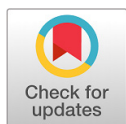
Abstract

The interweaving of in-person and online teaching at the university level requires the implementation of new resources that allow the coexistence of these two forms of education. To address this issue, we designed a pedagogical intervention that incorporated TikTok and FlipGrid in three courses (two in English and one in Italian) in an engineering program at a university in Spain. Then, we undertook a qualitative study geared towards the collection of data through surveys and recordings of three feedback sessions. The analysis of these data shows that the use of short videos for speaking practice is motivating and enriching in all the study groups and in both languages. However, although no doubts are expressed regarding the suitability of FlipGrid for academic purposes, the participants do not consider the use of TikTok appropriate at university. In addition, the comparison between languages, and therefore levels, indicates that Italian A2 learners prize TikTok over FlipGrid for oral production more so than do English B2 students. Our findings bring to the fore the potential of short video recordings and the need to link the academic and social contexts by means of social networking applications such as TikTok and Flip-Grid in order to create a more well-rounded educational experience.

Keywords: higher education, language learning, video recordings, TikTok, Flip-Grid, oral production

Resumen

La mezcla de enseñanza presencial y online en el ámbito universitario demanda la implementación de nuevos recursos que permitan la coexistencia de estas dos formas de enseñanza. Para abordar esta cuestión, diseñamos una intervención pedagógica que incorporó TikTok y FlipGrid en tres cursos (dos en inglés y uno en italiano) de un programa de ingeniería en una universidad de España. Posteriormente, se llevó a cabo un estudio cualitativo con el objetivo de obtener datos

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mediante encuestas y tres sesiones de *feedback*. El análisis de estos datos muestra que el uso de vídeos cortos para la práctica oral resulta motivador y enriquecedor en todos los grupos de estudio y en ambos idiomas. Sin embargo, aunque no se expresan dudas sobre la idoneidad de FlipGrid para fines académicos, los participantes no consideran apropiado el uso de TikTok en la universidad. Además, la comparación entre lenguas, y por tanto niveles, indica que los estudiantes de italiano A2 valoran más TikTok que FlipGrid para la producción oral que los estudiantes de inglés B2. Nuestros resultados ponen de relieve el potencial de la grabación de vídeos cortos y la necesidad de vincular los contextos académico y social mediante aplicaciones de redes sociales como TikTok y FlipGrid para crear una experiencia educativa más completa.

Palabras clave: educación superior, aprendizaje de lenguas, grabaciones de video, TikTok, FlipGrid, producción oral

Résumé

L'imbrication de l'enseignement en personne et en ligne au niveau universitaire nécessite la mise en œuvre de nouvelles ressources qui permettent la coexistence de ces deux formes d'enseignement. Pour répondre à cette question, nous avons conçu une intervention pédagogique intégrant TikTok et FlipGrid dans trois cours (deux en anglais et un en italien) d'un programme d'ingénierie dans une université espagnole. Ensuite, une étude qualitative a été réalisée pour obtenir des données par le biais d'enquêtes et de trois sessions de retour d'information. L'analyse de ces données montre que l'utilisation de courtes vidéos pour l'entraînement à l'expression orale est motivante et enrichissante dans tous les groupes d'étude et dans les deux langues. Cependant, bien qu'aucun doute ne soit exprimé quant à la pertinence de FlipGrid à des fins académiques, les participants ne considèrent pas l'utilisation de TikTok comme appropriée à l'université. En outre, la comparaison entre les langues, et donc entre les niveaux, indique que les apprenants italiens A2 préfèrent TikTok à FlipGrid pour la production orale, plus que les étudiants anglais B2. Nos résultats mettent en évidence le potentiel des enregistrements vidéo de courte durée et la nécessité de relier les contextes académique et social au moyen d'applications de réseautage social telles que TikTok et FlipGrid afin de créer une expérience éducative plus complète.

Mots clef : enseignement supérieur, apprentissage des langues, enregistrements vidéo, TikTok, FlipGrid, production orale, apprentissage des langues

Resumo

O entrelaçamento do ensino presencial e on-line em nível universitário exige a implementação de novos recursos que permitam a coexistência dessas duas formas de educação. Para abordar essa questão, projetamos uma intervenção pedagógica que incorporou o TikTok e o FlipGrid em três cursos (dois em inglês e um em italiano) em um programa de engenharia em uma universidade na Espanha. Consequentemente, foi realizado um estudo qualitativo para obter dados por meio de pesquisas e três sessões de feedback. A análise desses dados mostra que o uso de vídeos curtos para a prática da fala é motivador e enriquecedor em todos os grupos de estudo e em ambos os idiomas. No entanto, embora não haja dúvidas quanto à adequação do FlipGrid para fins acadêmicos, os participantes não consideram o uso do TikTok apropriado na universidade. Além disso, a comparação entre os idiomas e, portanto, entre os níveis, indica que os alunos de italiano A2 valorizam mais o TikTok do que o FlipGrid para a produção oral do que os alunos de inglês

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B2. Nossas descobertas trazem à tona o potencial da gravação de vídeos curtos e a necessidade de vincular os contextos acadêmico e social por meio de aplicativos de redes sociais, como o TikTok e o FlipGrid, a fim de criar uma experiência educacional mais completa.

Palavras chave: ensino superior, aprendizado de idiomas, gravações de vídeo, TikTok, FlipGrid, produção oral, aprendizado de idiomas

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Introduction

As with any pandemic throughout history, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic brought about significant changes at a social level (Moreno-Guerrero et al., 2021), with education being one of the fields most severely impacted by such changes. All universities worldwide migrated from an in-person teaching model to a hybrid system, which required both teachers and students to adapt (e.g., Dhawan, 2020; González-Lloret et al., 2021). Since then, instructional activities have become much more hybrid, and university teaching has been transformed with a huge amount of online learning taking place (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023; García Ponce et al., 2023). Consequently, online lectures cannot be a mirrored reflection of in-class lectures transferred to the online classroom. Rather, the courses have to be redesigned with active learning models in line with the course assessment criteria, which also need to be adapted accordingly. In this context, the current article seeks to analyse the use of TikTok and FlipGrid–two tools employed for exchanging short videos–as potential resources to practise oral expression in the foreign language classroom in engineering degrees. This experiment was carried out in the academic year 2021-22 with three groups (two English B2 groups and one Italian A2 group) that followed a hybrid teaching model.

TikTok is a proprietary video sharing social network created in China (Barrot, 2021), which in recent years, and especially during the health crisis provoked by COVID-19, has gained significant popularity amongst people other than younger children and youth audiences (Ballesteros Herencia, 2020). It ranks among the most extensively utilised applications globally. According to the internet statistics portal DataReportal (2023), in April 2023, TikTok had 834.3 million monthly users all over the world, and was available in more than 150 countries and 75 languages (Ballesteros Herencia, 2020). In April 2023, the length of videos was extended to a maximum of 10 minutes. FlipGrid, on the other hand, is an application used for sharing short videos on Microsoft's Teams platform. Indeed, it is employed for

online teaching by the university where this educational project was carried out. Both video exchange platforms have recently been created: TikTok in 2016 and FlipGrid in 2014. Exploring the characteristics, affordances, norms, and user behaviour of new social networks entails studying whether they are adequate for purposes that go beyond communication between people (Locher et al., 2015), in our case, the creation of a dynamic and collaborative learning environment. This need is even more pressing on foreign language courses, given the importance attached to communication and the need to partly compensate for the absence of face-to-face interaction in the classroom (García-Ponce et al., 2023; Mas García, 2020; Ziegler & González-Lloret, 2022).

The work we present here seeks to address this gap: the absence of sound empirical-grounded studies on the practicing of oral skills through social networks and video exchange platforms. The work provides data on teaching experiences in the West at the university level and incorporates a language other than English. As Manca (2020) underscores, in the research field of learning and technology, we need to go beyond the limits established and broaden the learning environments in which a specific communication platform is used and the geographic area where it can normally be found; in the case of TikTok, this is China and the whole of Asia. On the Internet, the visual aspect of communication is becoming more and more prominent, especially amongst young Internet users (González-Lloret, 2021). The above-mentioned author claims that future research should focus on very popular image/video sharing social networking platforms such as TikTok for language learning.

To address this objective and research gap, the research questions which we sought to respond to in the current study were as follows:

> Q1: What perception do students have of TikTok and FlipGrid in improving linguistic competences in a foreign language (FL)?

Q2: How has the use of these tools contributed to the acquisition of the FL?

Q3: To what extent has the use of these two social networks reinforced feelings of a learning community in an online context?

The following section presents an overview of outstanding publications on foreign language learning and TikTok/FlipGrid. Then, we address how the methodology and the study have been undertaken. Subsequently, a rendering of the findings gathered is offered, followed by a brief discussion and an outline of certain implications that the results have regarding teaching. The article comes to an end with some concluding remarks as well as some follow-up investigations which have the potential to open up new research avenues.

Theoretical Framework

Many studies have brought the need to introduce digital technology into the language classroom to the fore (García-Ponce et al., 2023; Hubbard, 2022; Ziegler & González-Lloret, 2022). Specifically, the application of social networks in foreign language teaching and learning has been studied in depth over the last decade in different educational contexts and geographic areas (e.g., García Ponce et al., 2023; Pérez-Sabater & Montero-Fleta, 2015; Rosón Jiménez & Losada Iglesias, 2020; Ziegler & González-Lloret, 2022). Recently, the compilations by Reinhardt (2019) and Barrot (2021) have offered data on the use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp in this order of relevance.

The results of these publications also reveal some other interesting facts: (a) in general, these social networks increase students' satisfaction with learning, interaction, collaboration, and the betterment of knowledge of the target language; (b) these experiments have mainly dealt with learning experiences in higher education (59.3%) and the learning of English (68.9%); (c) most users of these networks are university-aged students (18-24) who know and have a good command of the networks, which promotes a greater acceptance of these applications in the foreign language classroom as

motivating tools or tools with *edutainment purposes*. According to Barrot (2021), *edutainment* (Hogle, 1996) is a form of entertainment based on the idea that one teaches better if the students are enjoying themselves in the classroom–a concept originally linked with childhood education through electronic games and video games (Okan, 2003). Social networks, therefore, promote the blurring of the distinction between learning spaces, social relations, and recreation (Manca, 2020).

Conversely, social networks hold great pedagogical value for the development of communication skills, and thus their integration into the foreign language classroom contributes to propelling the active use of the language (Antenos-Conforti, 2009; Reinhardt, 2019). In this sense, the communicative model proposed by Canale and Swain in the 1980s set a new course in language teaching (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). The said model not only advocates for a linguistic competence per se, but also for a sociolinguistic and, above all, strategic competence that would allow students to implement metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies in the creation, monitoring/controlling, and review/self-correction of the message (Pakula, 2019).

Twenty years later, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* ratified this new didactic concept upon establishing that the communicative skill was comprised of three competences: the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences. In this way, the oral expression skill started to be considered a skill of utmost importance in the learning processes of a foreign language (Lazaraton, 2014; Pakula, 2019).

This change in perspective has arrived along with current theories of a sociocultural type, which postulate that social interaction is a fundamental element for learning. Indeed, interaction with others is considered a key component in the construction of one's knowledge of the language (Ma lihah, 2010; Pakula, 2019), so much so that the

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majority of poststructuralist methods consider the oral expression ability to be the main skill in foreign language learning (Lazaraton, 2014). It is for this reason that learning is not based exclusively on the acquisition of the linguistic system, strictly speaking, but also on efficient communicative exchanges (Pakula, 2019), hence the need to prioritise procedural learning as opposed to a declarative type of learning.

The introduction of technology in the 1960s and 1970s also contributed significantly to the introduction of the oral expression skill into the classroom and the compensating for the lack of practice opportunities outside its context (Albino, 2017; Bohlke, 2014; Newton, 2018). Likewise, the use of technology for oral practice allows for the creation of a relaxed and safe environment where communicative exchanges can be carried out (Bayhon Aranego, 2020). More specifically, recording short videos may counteract fears and even motivate students due to the active role they adopt in developing the activity (Göktürk, 2016; Gromik, 2012; Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022).

Moreover, unlike the fleetingness with which activities are carried out in the classroom, the type of activity in question entails an ideal space for peer assessment and a more detailed evaluation of both the content and the language since it allows one to later view the interaction as many times as necessary (Lazaraton, 2014). It is also an ideal resource to lower the psychological guard which many students put up with when having to speak in public. Videos additionally require the students to prepare beforehand (Hafner & Miller, 2011, 2021). In this sense, just as Goh (2007) points out, the pre-activity preparation allows the student to centre their attention on linguistic areas that are not yet automatised and to make a more polished and complete use of grammar and of the language in general (Bohlke, 2014). In languages for specific purposes, course designs including video recording have been devised so that learners can experience the *real* English language of

scientists when discussing and writing about science (Hafner & Miller, 2011, 2021).

Just as we had previously stated, social networks have attracted the attention of research concerning their use in foreign language classes, but little has been published on learning and even less on iconic social networks such as Instagram and Pinterest (Manca, 2020). There exist far fewer rigorous studies on the star social network of the past four years, TikTok, which was of special social relevance during the 2020 lockdown (Ballesteros Herencia, 2020).

Until 2020, we found no publications analysing TikTok as an educational tool. Yang's study (2020) on its incorporation into the secondary education English classroom in China reaches the conclusion that TikTok motivates the student to carry out activities guided by the teacher in class and to continue with English language practice outside the classroom by accessing authentic material published on this social network. For his part, Bayhon Aranego (2020) has shown that participation in TikTok challenges helps to reinforce Filipino students' confidence in their practicing of oral English and is a motivating tool for first-year undergraduates. Pratiwi et al. (2021) study the positive attitude of eight Indonesian participants towards TikTok for learning English. They conclude that this technical medium not only helps students improve their pronunciation skills, but also makes learning easy and fun.

Moreover, in Indonesia, Zaitun et al. (2021) examine what video students create on TikTok. The results of this teaching experience also evince that the activity improves students' speaking skills. Further, Ikhsanudin and Ali Purwoko (2022) design a theoretical model for online speaking activities with TikTok and other social media. The theoretical evaluation of their proposal con cludes that this social medium stimulates students' creativity. In Malaysia, Herlisya and Wiratno (2022) carry out an experiment with 20 students consisting of the observation of videos on

TikTok, concluding that the classroom atmosphere improves and learning becomes fun.

In Spanish-speaking countries, there is an ever-increasing interest in this tool for language learning. For example, Espejel et al. (2022) explored the opinions of students and pre-service teachers on the affordances of TikTok as a foreign language/L2 teaching and learning tool for learning Spanish in higher education. The results of their survey showed that TikTok may be incorporated into the classroom as a diverse digital channel of multimodal communication which can provide new spaces for the creation and sharing of audio-visual material.

Similarly, by means of a questionnaire and interviews, Rodríguez Medina et al. (2023) investigated the opinions of university language teachers on the introduction of TikTok in the classroom. Their survey showed that more than 50% of the staff interviewed would be keen on the incorporation of TikTok into the learning environment provided a seminar about its functionality were offered. However, despite the recent interest in this platform, these studies do not address actual learning experiments.

As for FlipGrid, McLain (2018) provided conclusive quantitative results regarding the network's adaptation for practising oral skills in numerous Business English classes in Korea. In Bartlett (2018), Flip Grid's own features were highlighted to connect students in a sort of online forum for an online course. Mango (2019) highlighted that students perceive this tool as being useful for improving oral comprehension and expression in second languages at university–in this case, Arabic.

The vast majority of the studies carried out so far, despite providing useful insights into the use of Tik Tok and FlipGrid for foreign language learning, presented some methodological shortcomings that might compromise the reliability and validity of the outcomes. These lacunae, acknowledged by the authors themselves, affect several fronts.

To begin with, all of them were conducted with a numerically limited sample. Additionally, they do not compare the use of TikTok/FlipGrid to other platforms so that their potential as learning platforms can be fully gauged and their advantages and disadvantages outlined. Finally, as most studies only featured one social platform, the results presented were purely descriptive, thus lacking a multivariate analysis which would make it possible to identify statistically significant differences in favour or against the use of these platforms as a teaching resource. As a result, the current study sought to contribute to fulfilling this methodological void and provide updated empirical data by superseding the main limitations of prior research.

Method

The methodological design of this research consisted of different in-class activities featuring experiential learning and data collected through surveys as well as data gathered through three feedback sessions carried out at the end of the instructive experience.

Participants

The sample was made up of students enrolled in the courses *English for Computing (B2)*, for students majoring in computer engineering, *English for Academic and Professional Purposes (Level B2)*, for the engineering in telecommunication services programmes, and *Italian for Academic and Professional Purposes (Level A2)*, which is a course open to all majors of the university. It is worth noting that according to the six-point scale (A1-C2) of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR), A2 corresponds to basic user and B2 to upper-intermediate language level (Council of Europe, 2020).

The study included the participation of a total of 217 students. Of these, 127 subjects used the platform TikTok whilst the remaining 90 used FlipGrid. Due to the fact that two of the groups

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were English language classes, the total participation number was greater for this language (n=133) than for Italian (n=84). As for the participation by schools, in the case of English, the School of Telecommunication Engineering had more participation (n=84), coinciding in number with Italian (n=84), whilst in the School of Computer Engineering the participation was lower (n=49). In terms of gender, the participation was higher in the case of men (n=145) than in women (n=72).

This asymmetry was due to the fact that the number of men in engineering programmes tends to be higher than that of women. With respect to the participants' age, the vast majority were between the ages of 19 and 22 (77.2%) whilst, for the age range of 23 to 28, the total number decreased significantly (9.5%). There were also six participants who were 18 (10.5%) and one subject who was 34 years old (1.75%). The sample had a wide degree of homogeneity as far as nationality was concerned, given that, save for five students from Germany, China, Romania, Poland, and Venezuela, the rest of the sample were Spanish.

Instruments and Techniques

In his study on incorporating short videos into the English classroom, Gromik (2012) proposed three instruments for obtaining data: viewing videos, interviews, and questionnaires. Stemming from this author's work, in the current study we opted for feedback sessions in place of interviews, which allow us to expand on the results through direct contact with the participating subjects.

The gathering of quantitative information was carried out through two channels. The first of these was a pre- and post-questionnaire with close-ended questions which included sociodemographic variables (sex and degree enrolment), variables describing the course (language and platform used), learning assessment variables (competences and specific abilities developed), and suitability of the methodology used for language learning (assessment of the learning results). It was an ad hoc questionnaire developed by the research team. Both versions of the said questionnaire were revised by a group of six experts from the field of linguistics and education. The modality for carrying out the questionnaire was available online through the platform Google Forms. The typology of questions corresponded to the Likert scale. In terms of the second of these channels, the grades given to each student throughout the teaching experience were registered with the objective of gauging the effect that introducing this innovative practice had, based on the previously-established variables. In total, the students recorded six videos in pairs on their assigned platform.

In order to complement the data obtained through the surveys, a group feedback session was carried out for each degree once the innovative activity was completed. The objective of this was to see, first-hand, the participants' assessment of the use of videos designed to help people work on oral expression.

Procedure and Data Analysis

In line with Pérez-Sabater and Montero-Fleta (2015), the research followed the phases detailed below:

1. Students filled out the initial questionnaire related to the use and usefulness of social networks in the classroom and the types of activities students preferred for practising oral expression.

2. They opened individual accounts in the application, TikTok or FlipGrid, and formed pairs of students for work.

3. They followed instructions as to the preparation of the script and recordings' themes, which were related to topics seen in class, as well as information about the length of the videos (one minute or one minute and a half in the case of FlipGrid) and other assessable aspects.

4. When carrying out the task, students recorded a conversation between the pair of participants in TikTok or FlipGrid and published the video.

The topic proposed by the instructor, for instance, a work interview, was the main idea of the video and was linked to the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the learning units worked on for each topic.

5. They viewed classmates' videos and made comments in the chat facility of the application.

6. Students reviewed the strong and weak points of the recordings in class.

7. Professors assessed each student (recording and comments to classmates). In the videos, the following points were taken into account: presentation (attitude, tone, originality, or creativity), content (whether it was interesting, informative, whether it addressed the topic), organisation (whether there was a sufficient amount of information for the assigned time limit), and linguistic correctness (grammar, lexical choice, use of expressions, and pronunciation; see Appendix).

8. Students voiced their opinions on the activity.

9. Students filled out the final questionnaire on using TikTok or FlipGrid in foreign language classes: opinions, attitude, and degree of satisfaction.

Feedback sessions were led by the same group professor. One was held with the TikTok group and another with the FlipGrid group. Prior to this session, the research team met in order to lay out a script and include the most interesting points for research. The sessions were recorded through Teams and later were transcribed with the objective of analysing the narrative produced by the participants. Coding was undertaken as follows:

GR1_number of student (School of Telecommunications B2 English TikTok)
GR2_number of student (School of Telecommunications B2 English FlipGrid)
GR3_number of student (School of Computer Engineering B2 English TikTok)
GR4_number of student (School of Computer Engineering B2 English FlipGrid)

GR5_number of student (transversal Italian A2 TikTok)
GR6_number of student (transversal Italian A2 FlipGrid)

As for the data analysis, it was carried out quantitatively using the statistics program SPSS. Firstly, a descriptive analysis of the data was undertaken. For the analysis of the variables used in the questionnaire, given that they were of a categorical type, we compared the averages using a Mann-Whitney U-Test.

In a supplementary way, a second statistical analysis was undertaken with the grade variable (i.e., the mark obtained on the task in the course). The average of the mark variable was compared by the platform used and language. In this case, the academic grade was a quantitative variable, which is why a Student T-Test was used to compare the averages. In a third analysis, also with the grade variable, we compared the averages by language and once again we carried out the comparison with a Student T-Test.

Lastly, concerning the grade obtained by the subjects on the video recordings, the average of all of the videos recorded by students was calculated. This was analysed based on the variables in order to perceive possible statistically significant differences in the data. With the objective of homogenising the given grade and increasing the degree of objectivity in the assessment, the three researchers revised and assessed the videos of all the courses involved.

Results

For the sake of clarity, the results of the study will be presented in four blocks: linguistic competences, perceived usefulness of the tasks undertaken by participants, assessment of the experience, and academic grade. The analysis was based on the four previously indicated variables: gender, the school each participant belongs to, language, and platform used, that is, either TikTok or FlipGrid. As space limitations made it impossible to include all the data analysed, only the total averages and

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the results that showed statistically significant data were presented.

Linguistic Competences

The assessments regarding the learning and improvement of linguistic skills through the creation of videos and the collaborative work stood out with elevated values, especially those referring to oral expression (3.97) and aural comprehension (3.95), which is an indicator of TikTok and FlipGrid's pedagogic potential for use in the language classroom to foment oral skills. In the case of oral expression, the total value was 3.12 and 3.28 for the instructive experience and collaborative work, respectively.

No statistical evidence was found to reject the notion that the averages are the same according to gender or language although, in this second category, the values of A2 Italian were slightly greater than those of B2 English. There were, however, significant statistical differences with regard to the platform used.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the assessment values of the FlipGrid group were higher than those of the TikTok group, both in the items regarding formative experience (first two columns) and in the collaborative work (last two columns). As the Mann-Whitney U-Test shows (Table 1), these differences can be found mainly in the skills of written expression and aural comprehension, as the level of significance

Figure 1 Assessment Values According to Platform
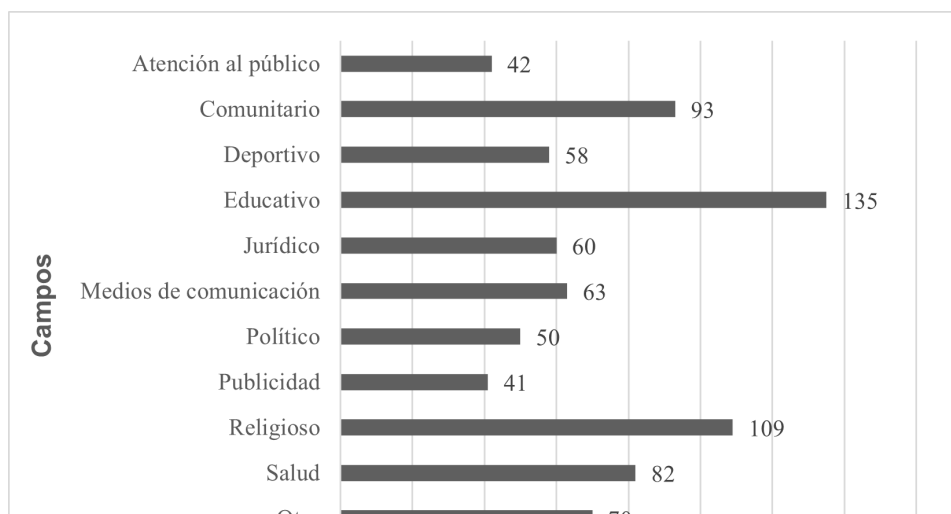
Table 1 Mann-Whitney U-Test by Platform

		Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Comparison platform used	The creation of video with the tool TikTok has helped me improve my written expression.	869.500	9254.500	-2.173	0.030
	The collaborative work with the rest of the class viewing and commenting in writing on the recordings has helped me improve my aural comprehension.	901.000	9286.000	-2.139	0.032
	The collaborative work with the rest of the class viewing and commenting in writing on the recordings has helped me improve my written expression.	872.000	9257.000	-2.213	0.027

was below 0.05 in the questionnaire items that are shown.

The participants showed, then, a preference for FlipGrid as opposed to TikTok as a didactic tool in the FL classroom. In the feedback sessions carried out at the end of the experience, the participants catalogued associating TikTok with the academic context as strange, as it is a tool used more in private contexts and whose videos deal with superfluous questions in order to *kill time* (GR3_26). Additionally, the fact that the videos could not be prolonged to more than a minute in the moment the experience took place limited the presentation (GR5_12). Thus, participants felt that this tool did not contribute beyond its social use. However, the FlipGrid group did consider the tool as appropriate and as having didactic ends. The preference for the tool appeared to have a noticeable impact on the perception that the students had of the development of oral linguistic skills.

In the case of written expression, it is worth noting that, just as we realised in the viewing and correction of the videos, in the case of FlipGrid, students tended to write and read the presentation, as the video was recorded with the use of a computer and, generally, was filmed at home. On the other hand, with TikTok, presentations tended to be more spontaneous, given the fact that, since they were filmed with the mobile phone, they could record in outdoor spaces and in a more creative way. The screenshots in Figure 2 illustrate these differences[1].

### Perceived Usefulness of the Tasks Undertaken

Within Block 2, in regard to the usefulness of the tasks undertaken, the participants offered a positive assessment in general. The participants highlighted the potential of video recording for interiorising taught vocabulary (3.87). The concept of working in teams also obtained a high score (3.83). Lastly, video recording also helped them get over the fear of speaking in public in a foreign language (3.80).

All of these perceptions were later corroborated in the feedback sessions held after the instructive experience. As an example, we present here some of the statements that support the results obtained:

> GR3_3: The concept of using vocabulary in a real context has proven helpful in acquiring this vocabulary.
> GR1_21: Collaborating with classmates has motivated me and allowed me to get to know them better.
> GR2_16: Speaking in public terrifies me, but being able to video record on my own has reinforced my self-confidence to speak in the FL.

In this case, we did not find any statistically significant difference for any of the four variables we analysed in the study (sex, language, platform, and school).

Figure 2 Screenshots Showing Differences of Expression When Using TikTok or Flipgrid

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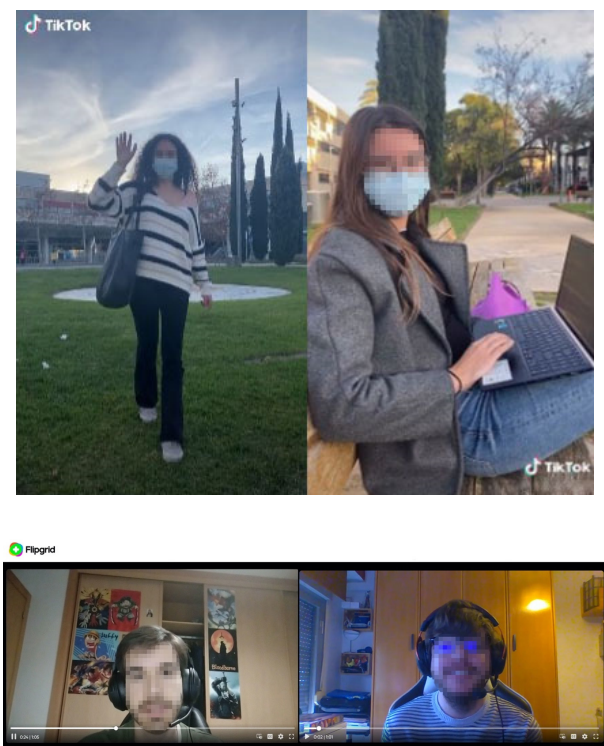
[1] Images have been fully anonymised, but these alterations do not compromise the results of the study. Data collection followed the regulations of the EU concerning General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) https://gdpr-info.eu/art-5-gdpr/.

Experience Assessment

In general, the sample highlighted the enriching (3.87) and motivating nature (3.99) of the activity, especially when it is compared with other types of more traditional oral activities although the said motivation was not due so much to using a social network (3.50), but rather the use of videos as a didactic resource. It is for this reason that the participants confirmed that they would like to do more activities like those mentioned (3.58).

Nevertheless, it is worth noting certain statistically significant differences that were observed in some of the variables. Concretely, in the language variable, we see that the Italian language students harboured a more positive outlook in practically all of the analysed items. As can be observed in the results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test, we found four levels of significance below 0.05 (see Table 2).

Despite the fact that these results were given within the language variable, we feel it is probable that this difference is marked by level (Italian A2-English B2) rather than by the language itself. At basic levels of language, the learning process is much faster, after which students reach a learning plateau in linguistic terms as they advance towards intermediate and advanced levels (Richards, 2008). For this reason, the advances tend to be more noticeable.

In addition, the transversal nature of the Italian course and elective nature of English courses could also have had some influence on the results.

Italian A2 is offered transversally to the entire university and the students choose this course based on their own academic motivations and interests. Conversely, students must achieve a B2 level in a language in order to complete their university degree, which is why they register for English courses with the objective of meeting the said requirement. Thus, despite being an elective course, it is probable that the university requirement regarding students having to take the course in order to obtain their degree, together with the pressure of taking it in their final year of undergraduate studies, is an element which indirectly influences the development of the course. This, therefore, may have had some influence on the self-perception which the students harboured when it came to their training process.

Conversely, the platform variable once again showed significant differences between TikTok and FlipGrid as didactic resources in the classroom. Just as can be deduced from Figure 3, the participants exhibited a clear preference for the FlipGrid platform for academic use.

Concretely, the items where we found a statistically significant difference corresponded to those that catalogued the experience from an opposing perspective, that is, as either negative or positive (see Table 3). As we stated when giving the results from the feedback sessions, the said difference was marked by the students' own perceptions of the use of TikTok and FlipGrid as pedagogic resources in the classroom. As Figure 3 and Table 3 show,

Table 2 Mann-Whitney U Test According to Language

		Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Language	In general, this experience has proven to be enriching for me.	2035.500	4591.500	-3.096	0.002
	In general, this experience has been negative.	2029.500	5032.500	-2.890	0.004
	In general, this experience has been positive, and I would like to do more activities like this one.	2015.500	4571.500	-2.959	0.003
	In general, this experience has proven to be motivating due to the use of social networks in a foreign language class.	2194.000	4750.000	-2.185	0.029

Figure 3 Experience-Related Averages According to Platform
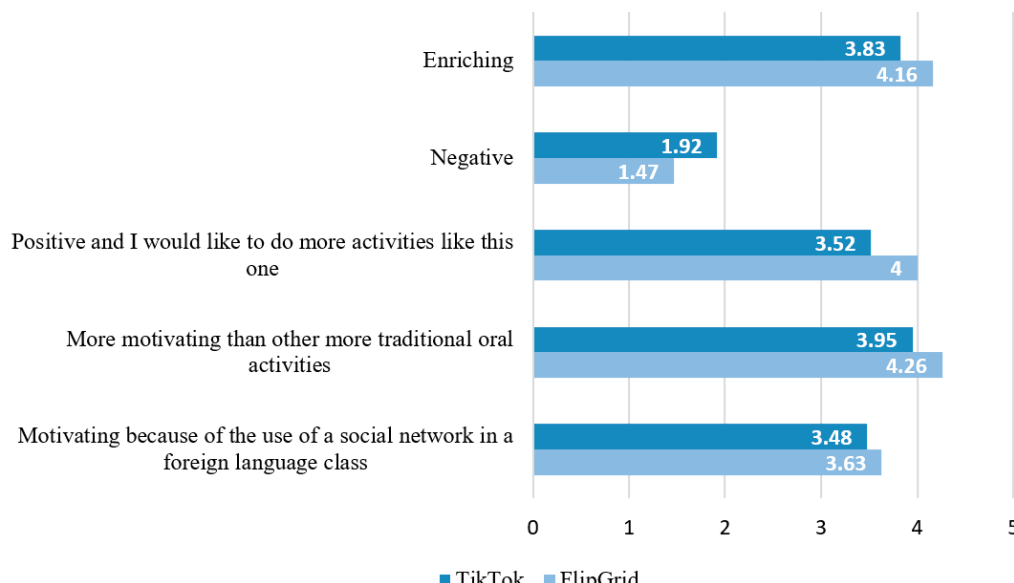
Table 3 Mann-Whitney U-Test According to Platform

		Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Platform Used	In general, this experience has been negative.	859.000	1049.000	-2.247	0.025
	In general, this experience has been positive, and I would like to do more activities like this one.	866.500	9251.500	-2.210	0.027

the students were less satisfied with TikTok than FlipGrid. Some of their statements are set out below:

> GR1_4: I enjoyed the topic. It is good to practise interviews before we are in front of a manager. However, I think the time was a little bit short, perhaps 1 ½ would be better because I had to cut the video.
> GR3_13: Making the video was great but, in general, I do not like this type of things on social media.
> GR4_11: I prefer this private platform [FlipGrid]. I would have never done this on social media.

Academic Assessment

As previously mentioned, the grades were based on the following criteria: presentation, content, organisation, and linguistic correctness (see Annex).

In general, the overall grades for both languages were high. The average grade in the English groups was 3.51 (out of a total of 4 points), whilst for the Italian groups it was 3.65 (out of 4 points). In comparing the averages of the grade variable by language studied, English or Italian, statistical evidence can be observed which rejects the notion that the averages are equal (significance of 0.000 in the Student T-Test).

The average grade obtained by those students who used TikTok was 3.54 (out of 4 points); and in the case of those who used FlipGrid, it was 3.65 (out of 4 points). In comparing the averages of the grade variable by the platform used for the activity, TikTok or FlipGrid, statistical evidence can be observed to reject the notion that averages are equal (significance of 0.019 in the Student T Test).

With regard to the variable referring to the school the students belonged to, statistical evidence which makes it possible to reject the notion that the averages are equal was also found. The average

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Table 4 Grade by University School

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	0.983	2	0.492	5.198	0.006
Within groups	20.241	214	0.095		
Total	21.224	216			

grade in Telecommunications was 3.48 out of 4 points, 3.60 in Computer Science, and 3.62 in Transversal Italian. In this case, given that it was a quantitative variable with more than two groups, a homogeneity test of variances and an ANOVA were carried out. Both tests showed that there is evidence to reject the notion that the averages are equal, at least in Telecommunication. The significance of the test was 0.006 (see Table 4).

Discussion and Conclusions

In online teaching methodologies, many of the teaching practices intended to offset the lack of in-person classes in the university classroom are improvised and do not employ efficient teaching models, as Baladrón et al. (2020) indicate. By way of a solution, in this article, we showed the putting into practice of a methodology previously profiled by Pérez-Sabater and Montero-Fleta (2015). Notwithstanding, the said methodology has been adapted to a new context and new social networks which have a current impact on university-aged students when it comes to effective online learning, blended learning, or simply language learning.

As far as research questions Q1 and Q2 are concerned, in general, the experience of practising oral expression by using short videos as a teaching tool was well received in all the groups of study; it was considered enriching and motivating and allowed students to practise new vocabulary better than with other types of more traditional oral activities. Moreover, recording videos facilitated a more detailed assessment of the activity by the lecturers, as it allowed the videos to be viewed as

many times as necessary (Lazaraton, 2014). The grades obtained, with an average of 3.5 out of 4 points, showed, just as pointed out by Bohlke (2014), that videos required thorough previous preparation focused on linguistic areas that are not yet automatised and on a more refined and complex use of grammar, vocabulary, and language in general. It has thus been "an excellent framework for integrated skills development", as also shown in a study conducted by Hafner and Miller (2021, p. 26).

Nevertheless, viewing the recordings was not always pleasant for all participants and was a handicap for students unaccustomed to listening and hearing themselves in an FL; this is in contrast with the findings of Gromik (2012), where the students valued the reviewing of recorded productions as one of the key elements in improving performance with respect to professors' assessment. This may be due to the fact that Spanish learners of English have traditionally been afraid of speaking in English publicly, even at tertiary level (Doiz et al., 2019; Ortega Cebreros, 2003).

Having said this, the use of these two applications had an unequal and, at times, contradictory reception. With regard to TikTok, this social network currently has too much of a ludic connotation, which makes it *less adequate* for higher education, especially because the videos are graded. As stated by Ballesteros Herencia (2020), TikTok is aimed at delivering entertainment and not university assessment. On this social network, people feel free to share their short videos, normally musical numbers, or challenges. This appears to have left its mark on many of the videos which were often presented with a certain ludic character, including costume changes and changes of scenery, thus creating a fun learning environment that connects the classroom with the outside world. This is the kind of media students are exposed to outside of class (Hafner & Miller, 2011), that is, social media applications which learners have normalised in their first language (González-Lloret & Rock, 2022), especially for entertainment purposes (Herlisya & Wiratno,

2022). The notion of a fun activity or edutainment (Hogle, 1996) is repeated in the comment section of the questionnaires and feedback sessions. In these sessions, some lower-level participants stated that TikTok was useful for encouraging them to participate in class activities and, especially, for making oral expression practice more entertaining. This ensured a learning space similar to a recreational space, as stated by Manca (2020).

On the contrary, with FlipGrid the videos were essentially readings recorded by the students; that is, students seated in front of their computers recording the assigned task. These results are similar to those in the study of McLain (2018), where there was an emphasis on the need for more interaction amongst participants in videos with FlipGrid.

The case of the Italian classes deserves special attention. The students with an A2 level had a much more positive attitude towards TikTok than the B2 English students, as did the first-year English students in Bayhon Aranego (2020) or secondary education students in Yang (2020). As opposed to the results presented in these studies, in which the age of the informants seems to be the key variable, in our results the language studied, Italian or English, could be the element that motivated the said perceptions. Students' proficiency (A2 or B2) might also account for this discrepancy between users of TikTok. Future studies will have to address this question in other group levels.

Conversely, as for the creation of a learning community (see Q3) or sense of community between students and professors (Bartlett, 2018), these tools have not contributed to the said objective. The viewing of the videos and comments by students in the feedback sessions confirmed that the class connection was not reinforced, although it was encouraged by the professors, as the active participation of all the students was not achieved in the comment section that these tools have. The above results are opposed to those generated in previous studies by Antenos-Conforti (2009) and Pérez-Sabater and Montero-Fleta (2015),

which feature activities on Twitter (renamed as X in 2023), or Bartlett (2018) with FlipGrid. In these articles, Twitter and FlipGrid functioned as real group connection networks between students and teachers, both in and outside the classroom. This is mainly due to the fact that the interactions in both platforms likely contribute to creating a sense of learning community, as in Antenos-Conforti (2009) and Pérez-Sabater and Montero-Fleta (2015).

It is also noteworthy that, unlike other similar case studies (e.g., Hafner & Miller, 2021), our students did not report any problems with the use of technology and the whole teaching experience ran smoothly from beginning to end. This is probably because they are studying to obtain degrees in computing, telecommunications, and engineering and are thus used to working with technology on most of the courses they take.

Although much has been written about students as passive users of video technology in the FL classroom, little has been written about the importance of allowing students to actively create content worked on in class in order to improve their oral production (Gromik, 2012). The results of this research study support the notion that, whether through the social network TikTok, the teaching tool for video sharing FlipGrid, or simply using an institutional server, creating short videos for practising oral expression must be an active part of language teaching. In regard to the aforementioned, we would add that this need is even greater in times when attendance and, consequentially, in-class activities are restricted.

Online teaching faces many challenges, especially in higher learning institutions with a long tradition and teaching methodologies which are too conventional in many cases (Baladrón et al., 2020). The challenge of attracting students to actively participate in the assignments set is even greater. Undoubtedly, the incorporation of these video applications has brought about an improvement in the methodology. Short video production

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might also prove effective in other learning environments, although this will need to be tested in prospective research studies.

Future studies on the use of social media for language learning will have to analyse in more detail what has been laid out here regarding the improvement of grading, by comparing grading in groups that use technological tools and those with more traditional methodologies. Languages other than English and Italian could also be taken into consideration (e.g., French and German for engineering), given that these languages are also offered in our department.

As for limitations, it is important to point out that TikTok and FlipGrid are proprietary. Follow-up studies should also feature free and copy left video applications for language learning. Another shortcoming would be that the professors themselves conducted the feedback sessions (a task that is usually undertaken by other researchers who do not participate in the experiment) as Ibáñez (2015) claims. This may pose a problem because of power relations within the classroom, especially when students would like to give negative feedback, for fear of being awarded a lower grade.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix. Evaluation Rubric for Tiktok/Flipgrid Videos

Grades	Presentation	Content	Organization	Linguistic Accuracy
1 p.	It is original and creative. The student uses an appropriate tone of voice and has a relaxed and positive attitude.	It fits with the topic requested by the teacher. It is interesting and/or informative.	The discourse is coherent and cohesive, with appropriate and varied use of cohesive mechanisms. The pace is good and seemingly effortless. There is a sufficient amount of information for the time allotted.	The student shows a high grammatical control and lexical mastery of the contents worked on during the course. He/she can make few mistakes or inaccuracies that do not cause incomprehension. Clearly intelligible pronunciation.
0.65 p.	It is not too original and/or creative. The student uses an appropriate tone of voice and has a positive attitude.	It roughly fits with the topic requested by the teacher. It is interesting or informative.	The discourse is clear and coherent, with an adequate, although limited, use of cohesion mechanisms. Pace fairly uniform.	The student shows good grammatical control and lexical proficiency, making errors that do not cause incomprehension. Pronunciation is clearly intelligible, although sporadic errors may be made.
0.25 p.	It is not original and/or creative. Occasionally, the student appears tense or uses a tone of voice that makes it difficult to understand.	It deviates from the topic requested by the teacher.	The discourse is very simple, although clear. Sometimes the pace loses intensity.	The student shows reasonable control of simple structures and commonly used vocabulary, although he/she does not always use the required structures and vocabulary and makes some errors. Pronunciation is intelligible, although comprehension may sometimes require effort.

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