Using *YouTube* Videos to Improve Students' Speaking Skills: EFL Teachers' Perceptions[1]

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Abstract

Speaking is acknowledged as one of the most difficult skills for English learners to develop. For this reason, many strategies have been used to develop this skill and one of which is the use of *YouTube* videos. Several recent studies have researched *YouTube's* effectiveness to develop communicative competence. However, little research has focused on what teachers think about it. This phenomenological study examines teachers' perspectives regarding the use of *YouTube* to improve students' speaking skills. The study was conducted in a master's program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language at a University School of Languages in the southeast of Mexico. The participants in this study were five in-service Mexican teachers studying at said school. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Content analysis was used to analyse the data obtained through the interviews. Findings seem to indicate that teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of authentic videos to develop students' speaking skills and understand the benefits of using authentic *YouTube* videos. However, they are not completely aware of the different activities that can be used with videos.

Resumen

Una de las habilidades más difíciles de desarrollar para los estudiantes de inglés es la habilidad comunicativa. Por esta razón se han usado diferentes estrategias para desarrollar dicha habilidad, una de las cuales es el uso de videos de *YouTube*. Recientemente se ha investigado la efectividad del uso de los videos de *YouTube* para desarrollar habilidades comunicativas. Sin embargo, pocos estudios se han enfocado en lo que los maestros piensan acerca de ello. Este estudio fenomenológico examina las perspectivas de los maestros sobre el uso de videos de *YouTube* para mejorar las habilidades comunicativas de los alumnos. Este estudio fue realizado en un programa de estudios de Maestría en Enseñanza del inglés como Lengua Extranjera en una universidad pública en el sureste de México. Los participantes de este estudio fueron cinco maestros mexicanos en servicio los cuales son estudiantes de dicho programa. Los datos fueron obtenidos a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas a profundidad. Para analizar los datos se utilizó el método de análisis de contenido. Los resultados sugieren que los maestros tienen una actitud positiva hacia el uso de videos auténticos de *YouTube* para el desarrollo de habilidades comunicativas y conocen los beneficios de dicha estrategia, sin embargo, al parecer no están totalmente familiarizados con el diferente tipo de actividades que pueden realizarse con videos.

Introduction

Several researchers have pointed out the complexity of developing communicative skills in English language learners (Bailey & Savage, 1994; Brown, 2007; Pinter 2006). According to Pinter (2006), what makes speaking a complex activity is that when we speak, two processes take place at the same time: speaking and thinking. While we speak, we monitor ourselves in order to correct any mistakes at the same time that we organize our thoughts to communicate them clearly. In addition, as Brown (2007) points out speaking has specific characteristics that make the process of communication difficult for non-native speakers, such as the use of chunks, contractions, colloquial words, idioms as well as the natural speed of native speakers and the presence of certain features of the language, such as stress, rhythm, and intonation, which may be unfamiliar to learners. Moreover, students also are required to acknowledge the conventions of the language which take place in conversations and these vary from culture to culture (Howarth, n.d.).

Due to the complexity of this language skill, different researchers have proposed strategies and classroom activities to help learners of English develop their communicative skills. Among these strategies and activities are the teaching of skills to negotiate meaning, asking students to present prepared talks (Richards, 1990), recording students during speaking activities to maximise their participation and have self and peer feedback (Tsang & Wong, 2002), having groups of students discuss a topic of their choice (Green et al., 2002), as well as including role play, information-gap, jigsaw, task-completion, information-transfer and reasoning-gap activities (Richards, 2006). Additionally, in recent years there has been an emphasis on

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the use of authentic materials to promote the development of students' communicative skills. As Guariento and Morley (2001) point out, if teachers are concerned about integrating authenticity in the classroom, materials and tasks should parallel "real world communicative processes" (p.352).

Many researchers have found that the use of *YouTube* videos in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom enhances students' pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and listening skills, as well as their engagement in speaking activities. For instance, Lu et al. (2019) carried out a study to explore the effects of learning through online authentic video clips with the speaking anxiety in Taiwanese EFL learners who were non-English. They found that students improved their oral production in that they were able to offer longer responses while having a conversation and asked more spontaneous questions than before using this strategy. In addition, students' levels of anxiety while speaking in English decreased and their attitudes to speaking improved. According to Muslem et al. (2016), the use of *YouTube* videos can help students to improve their fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. Similarly, Riswandi (2016) found that their use together with a Task-based learning approach improved students' fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, and were found enjoyable and helpful activities by the students.

Although several studies have been conducted regarding the effectiveness of *YouTube* videos to improve students' communicative skills, there is little research focusing on teachers' perceptions regarding the use of this type of activity. The present study examined five Mexican EFL teachers' perceptions towards the use of *YouTube* videos to improve speaking skills. The research questions were the following:

- *To what extent are teachers aware of the benefits of using YouTube videos to improve students' speaking skills?*

- *To what extent are they aware of the types of activities that can be used with videos?*

- *How do they feel about using YouTube videos to improve students' speaking skills?*

Literature Review

Speaking skills

Speaking is a complex process of receiving and producing information, which requires learners to consider different elements such as clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction (Brown & Lee, 2015). It is at the core of language skills (Bailey & Savage, 1994), and it is precisely the ability to successfully communicate with other speakers of the language that provides proof of language acquisition (Brown & Lee, 2015). However, this is considered the most anxiety-provoking of the four skills (Bashori et al., 2020). As Canale and Swain (1980) point out, communicative competence is comprised of four dimensions: the ability to accurately form sentences, words, and incorporate rules of phonology (grammatical competence); the production of coherent and cohesive speech (discourse competence); the use of strategies to compensate deficiencies in oral production (strategic competence), and the ability to use the appropriate language according to the context (sociolinguistic competence). Speaking is then a complex process that requires learners to consider its different elements.

The use of multimedia in the EFL classroom

According to Malini (2015) "the term multimedia was first used in 1965 to describe the performance that combined music, lights, cinema and performance art" (p. 108). It can also be understood as the "use of several different types of media to convey information." For Brinton (2001), multimedia are "technological innovations in language teaching" which can be used as "audiovisual aids" (p. 460). In recent years, the impact of the use of multimedia in the EFL classroom has been increasingly researched due to its affordances (Lu et al., 2019; Muslem et al., 2016; Rashtchi et al., 2021; Riswandi, 2016; Rodgers, 2013). Among the advantages of using this resource are motivating students, helping learners to understand input more easily, appealing to different learning styles, exposing students to different varieties of English, building schema, and improving students' linguistic skills.

Multimedia has been extensively integrated into classrooms because it is believed to foster learners' engagement and motivation (Dhivya et al., 2023). Multimedia is a tool that brings real-life examples into the classroom, and thus lessons become more active and innovative (Yang & Fang, 2008). Therefore, students are motivated to learn language through the use of multimedia as they find lessons fun and interesting (Guan et al., 2018; Hasan et al., 2020; Hossain, 2021), which reduces the fear and shyness to express ideas in a second language (L2) that can be experienced by learners (Malini, 2015), and therefore

fosters the development of the students' communicative skills (Hossain, 2021). In addition, the elements that are present in video can be appealing to visual and auditory learners (Brinton, 2001; Gani et al., 2019) and help students to process information more easily since images and facial expressions are cues to understand messages (Brinton, 2001; Erben et al., 2009;). Another characteristic of multimedia is that it provides students with real language. Students may deepen their understanding of a wider range of vocabulary and sentence patterns (Guan et al., 2018) as well as the culture (Hossain, 2021). Moreover, multimedia can help students to relate prior information with new (Brinton, 2001) and improve students' oral production in terms of fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (Malini, 2015). All in all, multimedia promotes a more student-centred approach for language learning in the classroom (Guan et al., 2018; Hossain, 2021).

Videos in the EFL classroom

As it has been discussed, the advantages of incorporating multimedia in the classroom are numerous. With the era of information technology, videos started to be incorporated into the classroom to enhance students' communicative skills. Some of the activities that can be used along with videos are discussions about the topic in pairs, groups or with the whole class, followed by different activities such as reporting in front of the class what students discussed in groups (Masruddin, 2018), discussing concepts related to the video in a mind-map (Yükselir & Kömür, 2017) or having students to create similar videos (Lestari, 2019). Apart from asking learners to give their opinions, they can describe the content of the video or the characters (Magasic, 2017).

One of the advantages of using videos is that the options of turning down the volume, pausing, and using fast forward can be exploited (Harmer, 2007). These options, as Harmer points out, can be used with different activities. For example, for silent viewing activities, students can guess the dialogues or the background music and provide reasons for their answers. Another option is to turn on the subtitles in their native language with the sound off and ask them to guess what the characters actually are saying in English. After these activities, students watch the video again with the sound on and they compare their guesses with the actual information or elements in the video. Students can also predict what will happen next or what characters will say when the video is paused. Another activity that involves guessing is using the fast-forward option and asking students to discuss what they think the video was about or what the characters were saying. These activities can be done the other way around as well, by having students listen to the video sound but without watching the images. In this type of activity, students guess the setting or some characteristics of the people in the video, such as their age. Similarly, the music or sound effects of a video can be played and the scene or the story is guessed. One strategy that is useful for the development of students' fluency is having half of the class watch the video while the other half face away. Students who are facing the screen describe to their classmates what is happening.

Videos can also be used to develop students' competence in using speech acts (Alver-Yücel, 2017). Students can analyse the distance and power relations between interlocutors in a video in order to identify the speech acts taking place. After the analysis students are given a card with a situation and they carry out a role-play activity using the most suitable speech act according to the context.

As can be seen, there is a wide variety of activities that are possible to use together with videos, not only to develop language skills but also to incorporate aspects of the culture in the classroom. Furthermore, thanks to the opportunities that the internet offers, it is easier to have access to all types of videos. The following section discusses the integration of *YouTube* videos in the classroom.

YouTube videos in the EFL classroom

One concern of EFL teachers is the incorporation of authentic materials in their classrooms to expose learners to real language and therefore to develop students' communicative competence. For this reason, the use of *YouTube* videos to develop students' skills has extensively been researched recently. Through these, students can be exposed to native speakers' speech and different English varieties (Jalaluddin, 2016; Meinawati et al., 2020; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018). As a result, students' productive skills improve when they learn vocabulary (Meinawati et al., 2020; Sakkir et al. 2020; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018; Sari & Margana, 2019), grammar (Meinawati et al., 2020; Sari & Margana, 2019), how to maintain conversations (Meinawati et al., 2020), how to organize their ideas better (Meinawati et al., 2020), the correct pronunciation of words (Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Meinawati et al., 2020; Sakkir et al. 2020), and the natural intonation of the language (Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Meinawati et al., 2020).

As *YouTub*e videos provide students with a context, they can understand the message more easily (Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Zaidi et al., 2018) and guess the meaning of unfamiliar words (Albahlal, 2019). They also help in creating a relaxing atmosphere (Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Meinawati et al., 2020) where students feel less anxious (Albahlal, 2019), more confident (Meinawati et al., 2020), and willing to participate (Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018). Another advantage is that the use of *YouTub*e promotes autonomous learning since students can watch videos on their own, outside the classroom (Albahlal, 2019; Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Jalaluddin, 2016; Sari & Margana, 2019; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018). In addition, these videos are easy to access, appeal to visual learners (Zaidi et al. 2018) and provide the opportunity to access up-to-date information (Sari & Margana, 2019; Zaidi et al. 2018).

Furthermore, the same activity with *YouTube* videos can be used to develop more than one skill. For instance, some activities that involve writing and listening are having students write comments (Albahlal, 2019) or notes about the video (Balbay & Kilis, 2017), and dialogues similar to the ones seen in the videos (Meinawati et al., 2020). Teachers can also write texts based on the content of videos and read them to students so they can write notes and reconstruct the text, comparing them with the video at the end (Nasution, 2019). For listening, writing, and reading, students can search a tutorial video about a topic they find interesting and write the steps followed in the video, and then share their notes with their classmates so they can try the activities out (Watkins & Wilkins, 2011).

As mentioned before, *YouTube videos* are suitable to develop communicative skills as well. Some activities that can be carried out are discussions about the title (Jalaluddin, 2016), topic (Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Jalaluddin, 2016; Sari & Margana, 2019), or main points of a video (Jalaluddin, 2016; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018; Watkins & Wilkins, 2011). These can also be targeted to drive students' attention to specific elements present in a video. For instance, students can be asked to identify the strategies for effective communication used in a video or the reasons the communication was ineffective. Similarly, two videos from different English varieties can be shown to students so they identify similarities and differences (Watkins & Wilkins, 2011). These activities can be followed by oral reports about the information discussed in pairs or groups. Since it is possible to address current events through *YouTub*e videos, students can exchange their opinions or record videos addressing the topic (Sari & Margana, 2019). Role-play activities can also be carried out with students recreating the scene of a clip (Watkins & Wilkins, 2011) or the structure of a dialogue (Meinawati et al., 2020). Another option is to have students redub the characters' and narrator's voices in a movie trailer. Finally, students can make predictions about the video topic or about what will happen next when the video is paused, describe their favourite character, or retell what a person said in a video (Jalaluddin, 2016).

Although research on the use of *YouTube* videos in the EFL classroom is extensive, there is little research within the Mexican context. What is more, very few studies focus on teachers' perspectives about its use. Therefore, the present study investigates the perspectives of a small group of Mexican teachers about the use of *YouTube* videos to develop oral communicative skills.

Methodology

The present study is a phenomenological case study (Cohen et al., 2018). According to Denscombe (2014), phenomenology seeks to discover how a phenomenon or situation is experienced by a specific group of people, and it focuses on discovering individual perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings, such as those of the participants of this study towards the use of *YouTub*e videos to develop the speaking skill. As Cilesiz (2011) points out, teachers' experiences with technology are one of the main areas of educational technology research and it is especially consistent with phenomenology. In addition, Simons (as cited in Cohen et al., 2018) defines case studies as detailed investigations about a specific issue, group of people, institution, or program from different points of view. Since the researcher sought to discover the different teachers' perspectives regarding the use of *YouTube* videos to improve students' speaking skills, case study was considered a suitable approach.

 The objective of the study was to examine five Mexican teachers' perspectives regarding the use of *YouTube* videos to improve students' speaking skills. The study aimed to discover whether they were aware of the benefits of using these videos and the type of activities that can be used with them.

Participants

The participants were EFL teachers studying an M.A. in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) at one of the major state universities in the southeast of Mexico. The MA program that the participants were taking aims to provide teachers with teaching techniques and methodologies that can be applied and

improved in their teaching contexts according to current and future students' needs. The curriculum was divided into thirteen courses which covered the current methodologies and approaches in language teaching, theory regarding assessment, the study of the language system, and the influence of culture on language, among other English language teaching (ELT) and ELT research areas. As follows, a table with the description of the participants is presented.

Pseudonym	Teaching experience	Workplace	Self-image as a teacher
Daniel	2 years	Private secondary school	Committed, responsible, tolerant, and respectful. Tries to adapt his teaching to meet his students' needs and interests.
Andrés	3 years	Private high school and private language institute	Open-minded. Usually eager to apply new techniques. Tries to create a relaxing atmosphere. Takes into account students' opinions and interests in order to motivate them.
David	3 years.	Public primary school	Creative and dynamic. Applies his knowledge about technology in his classes. Tries to avoid monotony in his lessons. Tries to be as concise as possible when explaining a topic.
Pedro	Seven years	Private secondary school	A strict teacher who is interested in helping his students to learn and use the language. An inductive approach to teaching. Uses technology tools in his lessons
Pablo	12 years	Public University	Responsible, committed, and dynamic teacher. Tries to maintain discipline in the classroom as well as a positive atmosphere. Encourages his students not to use L1 in the classroom. Integrates technology tools.

Table 1: Participants of the study

Instruments

Interviews are one of the main sources used to collect data in a case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In-depth, semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study since they are a technique that can be designed to elicit participants' vivid picture on the topic that is being researched (Mack et al., 2011). Moreover, the questions asked in an in-depth interview are open-ended and thus require detailed answers, beyond just a yes or a no. These give the opportunity to the interviewee to explain the reasons for their answers as well as the opportunity to express feelings and points of view (Turner, 2010).

In addition, the type of interview used in the present research was semi-structured. This type of interview is more flexible than structured ones (Norton, 2009), since questions are planned with anticipation, but their sequence and wording may change according to participants' responses (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, the prompts prepared for this type of interview provide the interviewer with clarification or guidance, and probes are meant to elicit more information (Cohen et al., 2018; Norton, 2009).

Procedure

Data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Individual interviews were carried out via *Zoom* and recorded. Once the participants had signed their consent form, they were asked fifteen open-ended questions (See Appendix) regarding their teaching background, their perspectives about the most difficult skill to develop by learners of English, the activities they use to develop students' communicative skills and their previous experiences with the use of *YouTube* videos. For the purpose of this study, their names were changed in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

The method used to analyse data in the present research was inductive conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Inductive content analysis is used when there is no or little information about the topic and thus the categories emerge from the data collected (Mayring, 2000). The information and conclusions that emerge from conventional content analysis are based on participants' unique views and they are not drawn from existing literature (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The purpose of this research was to discover teachers' perceptions and not to confirm a theory. Hence, since the literature available regarding teachers' perspectives towards the use of *YouTube* videos to improve students' speaking skills were scarce, the most suitable approach was an inductive one.

Recordings were transcribed over a period of three weeks. Then all the transcriptions were read in order to obtain a general understanding of the information provided by the teachers. The next step was to reread the information and identify the categories and subcategories in each transcription. Afterwards, the categories and subcategories in all the transcripts were grouped together to identify the main categories. Four categories emerged around the development of the communicative competence, namely elements, obstacles, activities, and the use of *YouTube* videos. Four subcategories were also identified under the last category: advantages, disadvantages, teachers who use *YouTube* videos, and teachers who do not use them.

As it has been discussed throughout this paper, the affordances of using *YouTube* videos in the EFL classroom to improve students' skills are undeniable. However, little research has been conducted in order to discover whether EFL teachers are indeed aware of such benefits and, what is more, if EFL teachers in Mexico do use *YouTube* videos in their classrooms. For this reason, the purpose of this research was to address both issues.

Findings and Discussion

After analysing the data collected through the interviews, the four categories and four subcategories were merged into two sections for the purpose of this paper, so as to include all the most relevant issues in a clear and concise manner.

EFL teachers' awareness of the benefits of YouTube videos

The EFL teacher participants of this study acknowledged the benefits of using *YouTube* videos to improve students' speaking skills. One of the advantages mentioned by all of the participants was that students can be exposed to authentic language and different varieties of English. As pointed out by teachers, through *YouTube* videos it is possible to learn collocations and other types of lexical chunks that are not always taught in the classroom because they are not included in textbooks (Pedro), or because it is not appropriate to teach but is used in everyday life (Pablo). In fact, Pablo said that as a student of English he learnt this type of language (specifically swear words) through *YouTube* videos. It seems Pablo's prior experiences as a learner of English gave him a better understanding of the problems students face when learning an L2. As it can be found in the literature, one of the strengths of non-native teachers is that they can better identify students' potential areas of difficulty (Selvi, 2016).

In addition, teachers mentioned the relevance of exposing learners to authentic vocabulary in order to help them to understand and be able to interact with native English speakers: "the problem with materials designed for language learners is that the accent is sometimes too exaggerated and when students encounter language in a real context, they do not know how to face the situation" (Andrés). Although it is crucial for students to be exposed to authentic language in order to develop communicative competences, they do not always have the opportunity to travel abroad. What is more, living in a non-English speaking country, the only contact students have with the language is usually in the classroom (Borjian, 2015). Therefore, *YouTube* videos offer a possible solution. According to Pedro:

> The advantage is that the language is authentic, is not adapted to a specific level. Sometimes I talk slowly or avoid using certain words, but the language used in videos is more authentic, real, and current. Especially when you can't travel, I think it is an easier way to expose students to a more natural and everyday language, for example by watching a vlog… that can be a great advantage.

Teachers' comments suggest one of their main concerns regarding the development of students' communicative skills is the students' exposure to real language, which they say is doable through the use of authentic materials. One approach to language teaching that seeks to develop students' speaking skills is the Communicative Language Teaching Approach which favours the use of authentic materials as a source of authentic language input (Brown, 2007). According to its principles, classrooms should be a preparation stage for real-life interactions (Richards, 2006) which can be experienced through authentic materials (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Studies have found that this characteristic of authentic materials is the main reason EFL teachers prefer its use over pedagogic ones (Abbasian et al. 2016; Ameen & Kamal, 2021; Omid & Azam, 2016) and that the main source teachers rely on to find authentic materials is the internet (Ameen & Kamal, 2021; Huda, 2017; Omid & Azam,2016).

Similarly, teachers consider that through *YouTube* videos, students can learn grammar (Daniel), the correct pronunciation of words (Pablo, David), and the appropriate intonation of the language (Pablo). They stated that a major advantage of this type of video was that, in comparison with the materials that are designed for language learners, authentic *YouTube* videos show more real and natural interactions between

interlocutors. As David said, "The interactions between characters are more natural, then students grasp this type of interaction faster and then they reproduce the language with ease". Guariento and Morley (2001) pointed out that in order to achieve authenticity in the classroom, materials and tasks should parallel "real-world communicative processes" (p. 352).

Another advantage frequently mentioned by teachers was that *YouTub*e videos are appealing to students and then lessons become more dynamic. "Classes are more interactive when you show students a video instead of just working with the book" (David). As there is a wide range of videos available, it is possible to address current or interesting topics students can relate to. "Another advantage is that authentic materials are up to date… I have used books that talk about really old social networks that don't exist anymore and students don't even know" (Andrés). Moreover, Pedro said that when students watch a video about a topic they are interested in, they remember the vocabulary and expressions presented in the video better.

As teachers in this study pointed out, and the literature shows, the use of *YouTube* videos in the classroom motivate students since classes are more interesting (Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Sakkir et al. 2020), fun (Albahlal, 2019), dynamic (Jalaluddin, 2016; Saputra & Fatimah, 2018), innovative (Sakkir et al. 2020; Zaidi et al., 2018) and student-centered (Jalaluddin, 2016). What is more, motivated students actively engage in the learning process, which fosters language proficiency (Gardner, 1985).

Some other benefits identified by teachers to a lesser extent were the ease of access to *YouTube* videos, the suitability of their use in online teaching (Pedro), the possibility of watching videos at home for independent work, and that in comparison with audio recordings, videos convey messages through body language, which helps learners to understand what is being said (Pablo).

EFL teachers' use of YouTube videos

Although teachers showed awareness of the affordances of using *YouTube* videos to improve students' speaking skills, few of them used videos for this purpose. They had not received any training regarding the different activities that could be done with *these* videos, and this was crucial in making the most out of this type of activity. In a study conducted to discover EFL teachers' perspectives about the use of authentic materials, teachers said that although they preferred using this type of material, they felt they needed training to learn how to design the activities (Ammen & Kamal, 2021). This view regarding training was also found in a similar study conducted by Huda (2017), where teachers considered that the design of appropriate activities was challenging.

The lack of training regarding the different activities that could be done with *YouTube* videos among the teachers of the present study may be the reason the activities they used with videos to practice speaking were limited. For instance, Pedro and Andrés said they frequently used videos only to present a topic and have discussions about it, as well as to pose questions about the information presented on the videos and comment on students' answers. Andrés also mentioned that he sometimes asked students to identify specific information on a video, write a summary about it to be read out loud, and commented upon. Pedro seemed to go a little further and used different programs to edit videos and add questions: "I make videos interactive with a programme called H5P or Nearpord… you can insert questions to practice listening… then we discuss students' answers… so it's for listening and speaking".

Other than that, teachers did not report using *YouTube* videos in the language classroom to develop the speaking skill. David admitted that despite being familiar with their use, he had never used them for speaking, but rather to teach vocabulary:

> I used to give students the opportunity to choose a cartoon to watch in the classroom during five or ten minutes… I used to design activities based on the vocabulary presented on the video and students had to match the vocabulary with images from the video.

Nevertheless, although David had not used videos to improve students' speaking skills, he mentioned having noticed that learners tended to repeat the expressions they heard on the videos, which implied that he was aware of its usefulness in motivating students to produce the language they had been exposed to.

This is in line with Krashen's (1981) views regarding the importance of input in the process of language acquisition. Simple informal input may be more beneficial than classroom language since the latter is very limited in terms of communicative functions. Krashen's analysis of different case studies led him to conclude that successful language learners are usually exposed to three different types of input: teacher talk, foreigner talk, and interlanguage talk. Thus, through the videos, students can be exposed to foreigner-talk input in a sense. The language used on *YouTube* videos, unlike foreigner talk, is not simplified input. However, this simplified input that is given to learners in foreigner talk can be provided by teachers when

using the videos by clarifying students' doubts or pre-teaching complex vocabulary. In addition, according to Krashen, language learners as well as children learning their first language make progress when they are exposed to language that is a little beyond their current abilities when presented in context. As has been discussed, teachers who participated in this study considered one of the advantages of using *YouTube* videos was that they provided students with a framework or context to understand the message being conveyed.

The rest of the participants mentioned they hardly ever used *YouTube* videos for speaking or other skills for different reasons. For instance, Pablo mentioned he had not considered the idea before since he has found other strategies to improve students' speaking skills. However, he did not dismiss the idea of using them for this purpose in the near future. Daniel mentioned the use of the videos in his teaching context was regarded as a waste of time and for that reason he hardly ever used them.

Although not all of the teachers who participated in this study used *YouTube* videos to develop students' communicative skills, they acknowledged its complexity and for that reason, they used other strategies for speaking. As they pointed out, among the activities they used were describing images (Pedro), having discussions about students' preferences (Pedro, Andrés), asking students to research a topic and give oral presentations (Pedro, Daniel), carrying out interviews in pairs and asking students to record their interactions, having debates, and asking students their opinions about trending topics (Pablo) or a reading (Andrés).

As can be seen, teachers do have positive attitudes towards the use of *YouTube* videos to improve not only speaking but other skills since they are aware of its benefits. Most of the teachers try to incorporate different strategies and technological tools to some extent in their classrooms to have more interactive lessons and engage students.

Conclusions

One of the biggest challenges EFL teachers face is the development of students' speaking skills due to the complexity of communicating in another language (Pinter, 2006). Teachers who participated in this study showed awareness of these challenges and for this reason, have used different strategies to develop students' communicative skills. One strategy was the use of *YouTube* videos. This type of video has been found to be useful to develop the four language skills (Albahlal, 2019; Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Watkins & Wilkins, 2011), but speaking is particularly addressed since through these videos students can be exposed to the authentic language used in everyday life as well as different varieties of English. In addition, students can learn vocabulary, grammar, correct pronunciation and intonation, and how to use the language for interaction with others. Teachers in this study showed they were aware of these benefits. However, it seems they had not made the most of the benefits *YouTube* videos offer to develop communicative skills. Teachers' comments suggested that they were not completely aware of all the activities that could be done using Y*ouTube* videos, as they had not received training specifically addressing it. Therefore, being aware of the usefulness of a teaching resource does not necessarily imply teachers are prepared to take advantage of it, especially when there is no training involved. Training might not be the only way to acquire knowledge regarding this issue. Disseminating research as the present study, where there is an extensive revision of relevant literature, can also contribute to becoming familiar with the different activities that can be done using *YouTube* videos and be considered when creating new materials for language learning.

Teachers' positive attitude towards the use of *YouTube* videos and their understanding of its benefits may be due to their professional development as students of an MA in TESOL. Therefore, the results in this study cannot be generalized since teachers under other circumstances or contexts may have different perspectives regarding the topic. For a wider view regarding this matter, it would be useful to carry out more studies where teachers with different characteristics from the ones who participated in this study can provide their views about the use of authentic *YouTube* videos.

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Appendix

Interview guide

1. For how long have you taught English?
2. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
3. How would you describe your teaching practice?
4. In your experience, which is the most difficult skill to develop for English learners? Why?
5. What activities do you use to improve ss communicative skills?
6. In your opinion, how effective have those activities been?
7. What elements do you consider important to teach to develop ss speaking skills?
8. Do you consider that those elements could be taught through authentic YouTube videos?
9. Have you ever used or considered using YouTube videos to improve ss speaking skills?
10. What activities have you used with YouTube videos? / What kind of activities do you think can be used with YouTube videos?
11. Do you consider the design of speaking activities with authentic YouTube videos is easy?
12. Do you think ss enjoy/ would enjoy watching YouTube videos to improve their speaking skills?
13. In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of using YouTube videos in the EFL classroom to improve speaking skills?
14. In your opinion, what are the advantages of using YouTube videos in the EFL classroom to improve speaking skills?
15. Do you consider that YouTube videos can be used for all levels and ages?