Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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How Does Explaining Content Through Videos Benefit Language Learners? Esp Students Tell us About it.

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ABSTRACT
This work aims at analyzing English for Specific Purposes students´ perspectives towards the recording of videos as a mean to explain class content. Seventy-five students took part in the study. They recorded one video per week for over ten weeks. Those students who had recorded at least six videos were considered for the study. The participants completed a questionnaire that was composed of twenty-six Likert Scale items. In the questionnaire, students reported their level of agreement on the items. The data was analyzed by conducting a factorial analysis of main components with a Varimax rotation system. Participants´ perceptions were grouped in four factors which explain 63, 68% of the variance. The resulting factors show that by explaining content through videos the participants´ motivation and academic achievement have improved. The participants have developed personal self-regulated strategies, self-awareness of their learning progress, and environmental self-regulated strategies, indicating, from their perspectives, a positive impact of the strategy in their language learning progress.
Keywords: ESP students, videos, motivation, self-regulation, students´ perspectives, self-awareness, academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

Society is changing and so is education. Nowadays, technology is an important part of people's lives no matter the age. That is why the use of technology is also expanding rapidly in the educational field across schools, colleges, and universities (Pachler, Bachmair & Cook, 2010). Technology has opened up many opportunities for innovative and rich methodologies that allow teachers to do both, motivate students and improve their learning. Today, there are several technology tools that are being used for classroom activities and homework assignments that have proved to be very successful, such as videos or blogs (Riel & Becker, 2008). Used wisely, these tools can become excellent resources for students to engage in creative and meaningful learning practices, and to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding inside and outside the classroom.

Videos in EFL Classes

Traditionally, teachers of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes use videos in their lessons to exemplify the use of grammar or vocabulary, to expose students to authentic pronunciation in English, to develop students' listening skills, or simply, to make the class more interactive and interesting. However, this tool allows students not only to collect information but also to be sources and creators of information for others. For example, students can record videos to demonstrate their understanding of class content, to improve their speaking skills, and to receive feedback from teachers and peers (Alwehaibi, 2015). This tool could even become a meaningful, engaging, and authentic medium for EFL students to communicate in English.

Benefits for EFL Learners

Literature review, as well as action research studies, show that videos are tools that facilitate language learning. According to Brook (2011), they increase student participation in speaking activities, builds students' confidence in using the target language, and enables authentic learning. Similarly, Watkins & Wilkins (2011) mention that using videos inside and outside the classroom can contribute to improve students' speaking and pronunciation skills and promote authentic vocabulary development. Finally, other authors suggest that this tool allows learners to connect the content learned in class (grammar and vocabulary) to their personal experiences, using the language learned, in this case, English (Mangubhai, 2005; Wang, 2005). Therefore, in educational settings, it can be a new and dynamic non-traditional teaching and learning asset.

Language production (e.g. speaking) is an important part of the language acquisition process. That is why using tools like video-making could help students to improve their English skills since it encourages them to speak and experiment with the language learned (Chartrand, 2012). In fact, there are several studies that show the benefits that learners can obtain when using videos for academic purposes in EFL courses. For example, in a study conducted with college students, Hazzard (2006) discovered that the creation and posting of videos assisted students in the improvement of their English language skills. Actually, the author reported that after doing this activity, 82% of her students said they preferred making a video and posting it rather than taking a traditional test - even though much more time and effort was required to create the video - because they could see the benefits that this tool brought to their learning process.

Another study conducted with twenty-four students in a foreign language classroom of Russia showed that video-making projects enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of language teaching. The author, Larisa Nikitina (2010), explains that this project allowed students to think, debate, and act using the foreign language. Additionally, videos can promote learning autonomy, which makes students independent lifelong learners who take responsibility for their educational process and do not rely solely on teachers or classroom instruction. In a study conducted by Bramhall, Radley, and Metcalf (2008), it was observed that the creation of videos based on class content, helped students to become autonomous learners who developed a deep understanding of the subject taught. Therefore, through video-making, students can become active agents rather than passive spectators of the learning process, which contributed to improving their language skills.

Now, what if students make videos explaining the information learned in their ESP/EFL classes each week? How could explaining class content through videos benefit language learning? That is exactly what this study intends to analyze. In this paper, ESP students' perceptions towards the recording of videos as a mean to explain class content are analyzed in order to learn about their opinions towards this activity in regards to the benefits they may obtain from it. Therefore, from students´ views, this study introduces a different perspective of video-making in EFL/ESP instruction that needs to be explored.

METHODOLOGY
Setting, Participants, and intervention process
The study was conducted at a government-funded university in Ecuador, during the first academic semester (May-September) of the 2017-2018 school year. We worked with 75 out of 94 students enrolled in the Technical English I (46 students) and Technical English II (29 students) courses offered in the Business Management major. 44 were female and 31 were male. The participants´ average age was 22.2, ranging from 20 to 30 years old. The students participated in the study voluntarily.

As the outcome of their autonomous work, the participants developed one video per week for over ten weeks, between May and part of July 2017. In the videos, they recorded themselves explaining the content they had studied in class in the previous week as if they were developing a tutorial or an oral presentation. They described key concepts and illustrated them with examples. The key vocabulary was defined as well. For this study, we decided to work with those students who had developed at least six videos up to when the data was collected.

Data collection and Instrument
Data were collected at the end of July 2017. A structured questionnaire was developed to obtain students´ perspectives towards the recording of videos as a mean to explain class content. The questionnaire was administered via Google forms and contained two parts. The first part contained questions of demographic information (age and gender); and, the second part was made up of a twenty-six Likert Scale items. In this part, students reported their level of agreement (*strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1)*) on the items to determine their opinions towards video-making as a mean to explain class content. The instrument was validated by two external researchers who revised it and reported the effectiveness of each item. Redundant items were removed and others restated.

Ethical considerations
Following ethical protocols, informed consent was taken from the participants. Participants identity was protected by having them fill out the data collection instrument anonymously.

Data analysis procedure
A factorial analysis of main factors with a Varimax rotation system was performed. The IBM statistical software SPSS 22.0 was used for performing the analysis.

RESULTS
The factorial analysis grouped the participants` perceptions into four factors that explain the 63,68% of the variance associated with the construct of the study (see Table 1).

Table 1: Total Variance Explained

Factor	Rotation Sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	5,922	22,777	22,777
2	4,034	15,515	38,292
3	3,722	14,315	52,607
4	2,879	11,073	63,679
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.			

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis Solution

Items	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4
24. Has increased my willingness of participating in the English class.	,799			
22. Has enhanced my English language learning experience.	,745			
25. Has provided me with more confidence when speaking in English.	,720			
17. Has increased my vocabulary.	,710			
23. Has increased my interest in learning English.	,705			
21. Has helped me to understand the content studied in class better.	,691			
16. Has improved my performance in oral presentations in English.	,649			
26. Has helped me to achieve higher marks in the English class.	,641			
1. Has prompted me to be more attentive in class.	,504			
6. Has induced me to plan my performance in the video.		,727		
8. Has induced me to rehearse what I am going to explain in the video.		,724		
7. Has induced me to organize my ideas to explain a topic in English better.		,662		
4. Has prompted me to identify key ideas of the content studied in class.		,607		
10. Has prompted me to evaluate my English learning progress.		,607		
9. Has induced me to monitor my performance while I make the video.		,537		
3. Has prompted me to review the content studied in class meticulously.		,534		
5. Has induced me to investigate about the topics studied in class in sources other than the ones provided in class.		,533		
11. Has helped me to become self-aware of my ability to speak English.			,850	
20. Has developed my listening skills.			,733	
14. Has improved my pronunciation.			,629	
13. Has prompted me to search for resources and tools to develop my language skills.			,589	
15. Has given me more fluency when speaking English.			,583	
18. Has prompted me to write in English.				,699
12. Has prompted me to look for the help of more knowledgeable peers/outsiders to improve my performance in the task.				,689
19. Has prompted me to read content in English.				,656
2. Has prompted me to take notes about what is being explained in the class.				,374

The results of the factorial analysis show that by recording weekly videos to explain the content covered in their ESP classes, the participants obtained benefits in four areas (See Table 2) which are related to motivation and academic achievement, development of personal self-regulated strategies, self-awareness of their learning progress, and development of environmental self-regulated strategies.

The first area represents the 22,78% of the variance. This factor is composed of 9 items which are linked to the benefits that the participants obtained in terms of motivation and academic achievement. The nine items denote that by explaining the content learned in their ESP class through videos, students` willingness of participating in class and their interest in learning English increased, allowing an enhancement in their learning experience as well as the development of their confidence when speaking in English. The vocabulary repertoire of students also expanded as students developed the videos. Similarly, the development of videos prompted students` attentiveness in class and contributed to a better understanding of the content, resulting in students` achievement of higher marks.

The second factor represents the 15,52% of the variance. It is constituted of 8 items that imply students` development of personal self-regulated strategies. The participation of students in video-making for content explanation induced them to plan, rehearse, organize, monitor, and investigate about what they would present in the videos. The personal self-regulated strategies that students developed prompted them to review the content studied in class and self-evaluate their learning progress as well.

The third factor deals with the development of students` self-awareness of their learning progress. This factor explains 14,32% of the variance and is composed of 5 items. The items indicate that due to their participation in weekly videos, students developed a sense of self-awareness of their learning progress as they became conscious of the improvement in their listening skills, pronunciation, and speaking fluency. This factor also implies that students became open to searching for resources and tools to develop their language skills.

Finally, the fourth factor, which represents the 11,07% of the variance, is composed of 4 items. These items cope with students` development of environmental self-regulated strategies. The development of this sort of strategies means that students got inspired to write and read in English, take notes during class, as well as to ask for the help of more knowledgeable peers to enhance their performance in the videos.

Undoubtedly, giving students the possibility of explaining the content delivered in class through weekly videos, enables them to demonstrate what they have grasped in those academic encounters and develop their speaking skills as it is asserted by Almewehaibi (2015). One of the main benefits that language learners get, considering the estimation of the factorial analysis, is the increase in their motivation and improvement of their academic achievement. The development of the task encourages students to be attentive in class, contributing to a better comprehension of the content delivered, better results in their performance and consequently, an improved academic achievement. In addition, students expand their vocabulary as they must certainly look for linguistic resources to perform the explanations in the videos.

Chartrand (2012) states that video-making allows students to practice the language learned. As in any oral task, the more one practices, the more confident one feels and the better the outcome. This indicates that because of regular video-making (which implies continuous practice of the language), students tend to feel more motivated and confident to participate and speak in English during class, enhancing their learning experience. This confirms the assertion of Brook (2011) who indicated that videos builds students' confidence in using the target language and increase their participation in speaking tasks.

In their study, Bramhall, Radley, and Metcalf (2008) reported that the development of videos based on class content encourages students´ autonomy. In this sense, the factorial analysis also demonstrated that as a result of their work on the weekly videos, students built personal and environmental self-regulated strategies (Maftoon & Tasnimi, 2014) which have a close connection with learning autonomy. The self-regulation of their learning process constitutes then another benefit that students obtain from this task. Since they have to explain the content in a coherent way to make themselves understood by their audience (the teacher in this case), they have to review/read the material studied in class and investigate/read about the topic to expand their knowledge on it.

In addition, the task itself induces students to take notes during the class as well as plan, write, organize, and rehearse (by themselves) what they are going to say in their explication to get a decent outcome. As time passes, they even develop the capacity of monitoring their performance while recording their work and self-evaluate their learning progress. All these conditions prompt students to take ownership of their learning process, turning them into active and more autonomous learners as suggested by Bramhall, Radley, and Metcalf (2008).

The study conducted by Gholam-Reza & Anahid (2014) showed that there is a significant relationship between students´ use of self-regulated learning strategies and the development of their language proficiency. The fact of taking control of their learning process enables students to develop a sense of self-awareness of their learning progress, one of the factors yield by the factorial analysis. They become aware of how much they have assimilated in class and therefore, what needs reinforcement. They also become aware of how much their linguistic skills have improved and seek for means to enhance them if necessary. Asking for help of more knowledgeable peers to enhance their performance in the videos becomes a common practice. It also becomes a sign of learning self-regulation as a result of becoming self-aware of their learning progress.

CONCLUSIONS

This study intended to analyze ESP students' perceptions towards the recording of videos as a means to explain class content to learn about the benefits that they as language learners obtain from it. The analysis of the results leads us to conclude that giving language learners the possibility making videos to explain class content not only enhances their linguistic skills (speaking mainly), which was in first place the purpose of the activity. It also impacts the academic, cognitive, and social aspects that interfere with language learning.

Linguistically, students experience an evident and quick enhancement in their language learning making them feel motivated and driven to learn. Academically, students achieve higher scores because the activity requires that the learner becomes more committed to his learning process, in addition to the increase in their motivation. Therefore, putting into practice self-regulatory strategies that bring up their cognitive abilities. Similarly, learners´ social skills are also enhanced as students seek the help of more knowledgeable peers to develop the task, enabling them to build connections and a sense of bond among them.

As can be seen, explaining content through videos has a positive impact on language learning in a variety of aspects, becoming a powerful tool for EFL/ESP classes. It encourages learners to take ownership of their learning process and induces them to become autonomous. Foreign language teachers should consider implementing this strategy in their instruction, adjusting it according to the needs of their students.

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