Leveraging digital platforms to boost speaking skills in virtual classrooms

Aprovechar las plataformas digitales para mejorar las habilidades de expresión oral en las aulas virtuales

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of digital platforms for the improvement of oral skills within virtual classrooms, focusing on Vocaroo, Flipgrid, Quizizz, Zoom and HelloTalk. The literature review highlights the critical role of digital tools in language learning, emphasizing their unique features: Vocaroo enables flexible speech recording and review, Flipgrid fosters collaboration through interactive video responses, Zoom facilitates real-time communication, Quizizz integrates gamification with language practice, and HelloTalk provides conversational exchanges with native speakers. The aim of the research is to assess the impact of these platforms on language proficiency by analyzing learner engagement, learning outcomes, and platform-specific features. Adopting a mixed methods approach, the study involved 80 intermediate level English language learners from the Technical University of Babahoyo. During a six-week experimental period, participants used these tools to develop their oral skills. The findings show that the digital platforms significantly improved opportunities to practice speaking, followed by listening comprehension, with minimal impact on reading and writing. Flipgrid and HelloTalk were particularly effective in fostering active participation and confidence, while Quizizz demonstrated a stronger connection to reading and writing tasks than to speaking. The study concludes that platforms such as Vocaroo, Flipgrid, HelloTalk and Quizizz effectively improve learners' fluency, confidence and pronunciation in virtual classrooms. These tools create dynamic, interactive environments that stress speaking and listening skills, resulting in notable gains in students' oral proficiency and communication skills in online learning contexts.

Key words: digital platforms, speaking skills, virtual classrooms, language learning, CLT

RESUMEN

Este estudio investiga la eficacia de las plataformas digitales para la mejora de las destrezas orales dentro de las aulas virtuales, centrándose en Vocaroo, Flipgrid, Quizizz, Zoom y

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HelloTalk. La revisión bibliográfica destaca el papel fundamental de las herramientas digitales en el aprendizaje de idiomas, haciendo hincapié en sus características únicas: Vocaroo permite grabar y revisar discursos de forma flexible, Flipgrid fomenta la colaboración mediante respuestas interactivas en vídeo, Zoom facilita la comunicación en tiempo real, Quizizz integra la gamificación con la práctica de idiomas y HelloTalk proporciona intercambios conversacionales con hablantes nativos. El objetivo de la investigación es evaluar el impacto de estas plataformas en el dominio del idioma mediante el análisis de la participación del alumno, los resultados del aprendizaje y las características específicas de la plataforma. Adoptando un enfoque de métodos mixtos, en el estudio participaron 80 estudiantes de inglés de nivel intermedio de la Universidad Técnica de Babahoyo. Durante un periodo experimental de seis semanas, los participantes utilizaron estas herramientas para desarrollar sus destrezas orales. Los resultados muestran que las plataformas digitales mejoraron significativamente las oportunidades de practicar la expresión oral, seguidas de la comprensión auditiva, con un impacto mínimo en la lectura y la escritura. Flipgrid y HelloTalk resultaron especialmente eficaces para fomentar la participación activa y la confianza, mientras que Quizizz demostró una mayor conexión con las tareas de lectura y escritura que con la expresión oral. El estudio concluye que plataformas como Vocaroo, Flipgrid, HelloTalk y Quizizz mejoran eficazmente la fluidez, la confianza y la pronunciación de los alumnos en las aulas virtuales. Estas herramientas crean entornos dinámicos e interactivos que hacen hincapié en las destrezas orales y auditivas, lo que se traduce en notables avances en la competencia oral y las habilidades comunicativas de los estudiantes en contextos de aprendizaje en línea.

Palabras claves: plataformas digitales, destrezas orales, aulas virtuales, aprendizaje de idiomas, CLT.

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INTRODUCTION

Importance and purpose

The accelerated advancement of digital platforms has transformed the way we learn languages, creating new opportunities for interactive and immersive experiences in virtual classrooms. This study focuses on leveraging digital platforms to boost oral skills among undergraduate students at the University of Babahoyo, particularly in its language center. As learners increasingly rely on virtual environments for their education, the need for effective methods that foster active language use and communicative confidence becomes critical. This research is especially relevant given the challenges that digital classrooms pose for oral practice, such as the limitation of spontaneous conversation and the difficulty in ensuring equal participation.

This study aims to explore and identify the most effective digital platforms and tools for improving students' speaking skills in an online setting, ultimately seeking to foster better language outcomes and increase students' confidence in verbal communication. By analyzing the experiences of both students and teachers, this research aims to create a model for incorporating digital resources that encourage real-time interaction and practical language use. The knowledge gained will not only benefit students at the University of Babahoyo language center, but could also serve as a resource for other institutions seeking to improve oral skills in virtual language learning environments.

Origen and Background

This study begins by outlining key approaches that are interconnected in supporting the learning and development of a foreign language, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT originated in Europe in the 1970s and has since evolved both theoretically and practically. Adem and Berkessa (2022) emphasize that communication is central to the language learning process and that classroom activities, along with the roles of teachers and students, should be assessed by how effectively they encourage communicative interaction. In their study, Adem and Berkessa refer to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), who

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describe the teacher's role in CLT as facilitating communication while students actively engage as communicators.

With technological advances and the impact of the post-pandemic era, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has shifted focus from grammar-based methods to fostering real-world communication (Adem and Berkessa, 2022). Digital platforms now align with CLT by providing interactive tools that simulate authentic conversations, promoting the practical use of language. Consequently, it is essential to identify which digital platforms can best support the development of speaking skills and integrate them effectively within the classroom. Although some limitations and challenges may still hinder the learning process, teachers must take proactive steps to work alongside these technological advancements to enhance students' language acquisition.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has also evolved significantly in the digital era. Since the 1980s, CALL has offered language learners additional resources such as language games, pronunciation tools, and interactive exercises. Its development has paved the way for digital platforms that now incorporate advanced, real-time speaking practices through multimedia tools. As Rasekh Eslami and Zohoor (2023) notes, this "fusion of technology and L2 pragmatics has produced a paradigm shift in educational language" (p. 2). CALL's adaptability allows it to leverage digital tools to create immersive, interactive, and contextually rich environments that support effective language learning.

The digital age assumed enormous importance during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in higher education, as this period marked a global shift to online learning. University educators had to quickly transform lesson plans, search for digital resources, and adapt their teaching methods, which accelerated the development of digital competence among educators. Now, in the post-pandemic landscape, digital platforms are widely used in all academic activities. Myyry et al. (2022) stress this transformation, noting that technology has evolved to enhance the learning environment in numerous ways, such as "supporting collaborative learning and knowledge construction, aiding student understanding through

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visualization tools, providing feedback and monitoring progress, and facilitating online quizzes and assessments for learning" (p. 2).

As technology advances, artificial intelligence (AI) is making a transformative impact in education, benefiting both teachers and students. Vera (2023) confirms that AI and its automated systems hold the potential to revolutionize educational practices. This signals a call to educators to proactively prepare for AI's transformative influence. With its powerful tools and technologies, AI is reshaping the educational landscape, enhancing both teaching and learning experiences (Vera, 2023, p. 67).

AI brings multiple advantages to the teaching and learning process, such as automated grading systems, timely feedback, personalized learning paths, and support for diverse learning styles. It enables interactive and immersive experiences where students receive content and exercises tailored to their individual needs. Through AI-powered simulation scenarios, students can develop oral skills, practicing correct pronunciation and the appropriate use of linguistic and sociolinguistic elements. These tools significantly enhance English language proficiency in real-time contexts. Platforms like Duolingo, FluentU, Vocaroo, Quizizz, Nearpod, Padlet, Flipgrid, and Zoom now offer features specifically for conversation practice, providing feedback on pronunciation and facilitating real-time conversation simulations.

General Contextualization

Digital Platforms

Digital technology has had a deep impact on language learning and teaching. The rise of modern digital platforms is due to the accessibility and wide availability of resources made possible by digital advances. Digital platforms also incorporate technical tools that facilitate knowledge transfer, such as social networks. The integration of digital technology in education is exemplified by blended learning and e-learning approaches, which have reconfigured the role of the teacher from being the primary source of knowledge to acting as a facilitator in the learning process (Alakrash et al. 2022).

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Alakrash et al. (2022) confirm that although several studies have examined the impact and effectiveness of digital platforms in countries such as Japan and Korea, research on their use among EFL learners in Malaysia is limited. Previous studies have often focused on individual language skills, such as writing or pronunciation, rather than examining language skill development holistically. In contrast, this study will explore how digital platforms support language proficiency, especially in speaking. In addition, strategic use of technology has been shown to improve student engagement in learning activities, suggesting that when technology is integrated thoughtfully, it can motivate students and encourage their active participation in the classroom.

Speaking skills

Speaking skills are crucial in teaching English as a foreign language, as they enable students to communicate effectively, gain confidence and receive real-time feedback, all of which promote linguistic fluency and social integration. They also improve pronunciation and cultural understanding, and open doors to academic and professional opportunities. According to Fitria et al. (2023), point out that Speaking and Writing are recognized as expressive or productive skills and are among the four essential skills that students must master in English. These skills demonstrate that learners can communicate effectively and express their ideas clearly.

Fitria et al. (2023) cited to Haryudin and Jamilah (2018) who defines that English, as a global language, requires extensive practice to achieve fluency. Therefore, it is accepted theory that learners need continuous practice both inside and outside the classroom. This will be achieved by using various media and platforms to improve their oral skills. it is worth noting that there are many students who take advantage of specific digital tools to support their learning and fluency in English.

Below are some digital platforms focused solely on the development of Speaking skills, practice pronunciation and improve the fluency. The *Duolingo* app has become a popular choice in mobile learning due to its simplicity and effectiveness in enhancing English and

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other communication skills. Munday (2016) was cited by Fitria who describes Duolingo as a digital learning tool supported by advanced technology, featuring a user-friendly and engaging interface ideal for English practice. The app offers a range of levels, from beginner to advanced, making it suitable for students in elementary, junior high, and high school, especially those new to learning English. Duolingo presents material in text, audio, and visual formats, with exercises that include translating sentences, matching sentence pairs, interpreting spoken words, and pronouncing written words (Fitria et al., 2023)

In conclusion, Duolingo can contribute to the development of speaking skills in a number of ways, such as pronunciation as the app uses speech recognition technology to assess pronunciation and provides immediate feedback to help learners improve. Duolingo is highly interactive, offering a game that is crucial for developing fluency and confidence in speaking. Duolingo applications provide a solid foundation for developing advanced speaking skills.

Zoom Meetings technology, now widely used, is an online videoconferencing platform that facilitates communication through Zoom Meetings. Putri and Suryaman (2022) reveal that Zoom is a versatile platform for written, oral, and video communication with practical, affordable, and easy-to-use features adaptable to various needs. Their study aimed to analyze, through qualitative methods, how Zoom can help students improve their oral skills. The results shows that many students have difficulty improving their speaking skills through Zoom meetings, as they tend to engage more and understand lessons better in face-to-face settings. Ultimately, this study concluded that while Zoom meetings can have both positive and negative effects on oral skills, students' progress depends greatly on their motivation and commitment to learning English.

The teacher's role involves constantly innovating and seeking improvements to develop oral proficiency, optimizing the use of the applications so that students can continuously enhance this skill. The goal is to encourage constant practice of this skill through production exercises, such as the creation of small groups in zoom meetings where students can discuss specific topics, participate in discussions, sing, hold conversations and, in general, motivate them to

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use English in real situations and collaborative projects. Each meeting should be a practice opportunity that facilitates contact with this competency, even if only for a short time.

Vocaroo apps allow users to record their voices and sounds, which can be saved in a variety of file formats for sharing with compatible devices, such as cell phones and computers. These applications also allow students to create and send audio files and can be installed on tablets, phones, or computers via web browsers. Notable examples include Vocaroo, Voki, and VoiceThread. Vocaroo helps the acquisition, production, storage, communication, and presentation of audio content through a microphone, functioning as stand-alone software intended specifically for voice recording, which can then be downloaded or shared through links (López, 2022).

In summary, Vocaroo offers several benefits as an online tool for recording or uploading audio. This free, easy-to-use application allows users to download, share, or embed audio files on websites, social networks, and email without the need for registration, additional software, or recording limits. The ability to record voice messages in real-time without installing any app makes it particularly convenient. This tool can greatly enhance the development of speaking skills, especially pronunciation. Students can record and instantly share their audio via a link, making it an ideal resource for practicing and submitting assignments to instructors.

The option to re-record as many times as needed encourages students to aim for fluency and accuracy. Additionally, Vocaroo can be used for practicing tongue twisters, which is beneficial for mastering challenging sounds and improving articulation. Furthermore, Vocaroo supports various informative activities, such as presenting, storing, processing, and gathering data, making it a versatile tool for collaborative and communicative tasks.

Flipgrid, introduced by Charles Miller in 2015, is an online communication tool focused on video-based discussions. This free platform allows teachers to monitor and listen to debate contributions while cultivating a supportive, interactive learning environment. Students can engage with others' videos by posting brief video responses, making it an ideal tool for

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developing speaking skills. Flipgrid offers unique advantages, such as facilitating topic discussions, enabling students to receive feedback from peers, allowing teachers to respond to students' videos, and promoting active participation through video interactions (Majors, 2024).

In addition, Majors (2024) underscores the value of online, video-based discussions on Flipgrid, particularly for enhancing oral expression, integrating various language skills, and boosting linguistic competence. Few platforms are specifically designed to foster in-depth discussion on specific topics and promote close group interaction, for that reason, Flipgrid turns out to be an exceptional application. In this study, the majority of students reported that Flipgrid increased their engagement, enhanced their motivation, and developed their speaking abilities. Consequently, the author concludes that Flipgrid has strong potential for language learning applications at the tertiary level.

HelloTalk is a mobile-assisted language learning program designed to foster immersive cultural experiences through conversation. As noted by Yolanda & Abbas (2022), HelloTalk is an innovative platform that connects learners directly with native speakers, enabling real-time text and voice interactions from a smartphone. This user-friendly program offers multiple features, such as "Helloword," "English Time," "Hello English," "Amy," "Translate," "English Dictionary," and a notepad (Rosilah and Ulfa, 2024). Overall, HelloTalk proves to be highly effective in enhancing students' speaking skills.

 This app is highly effective because it encourages English practice with native speakers and connects users with Spanish learners, creating a valuable opportunity for language exchange through everyday conversations. It also allows you to create groups with your learning preferences. Consistent English practice through the app enhances language skills and builds speaking proficiency, ultimately improving oral expression. Among the four language skills, oral expression is especially critical, as it is used in daily interactions. Additionally, students have reported that using HelloTalk for independent study offers increased communication opportunities (Rosilah & Ulfa, 2024).

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Many researchers suggest that Quizzes can enhance students' learning abilities. Numerous studies have specifically used *Quizizz* to help improve students' skills, particularly by engaging their interest in mastering vocabulary. However, teachers should focus on all areas of English reading, speaking, listening, and writing. In other words, educators need to design creative learning resources that maintain student interest while still facilitating learning. Furthermore, to develop speaking skills, teachers should leverage Quizizz's audio and video features to provide targeted feedback based on students' performance (Liunokas, 2024).

This confirms that it is up to the teacher to explore the best technological applications according to the objective of the class and the skills to be developed in order to take advantage of all the resources offered, such as Quizizz. Quizizz, with its audio and video functions, allows teachers to create activities that not only evaluate content comprehension but also encourage oral and aural interaction in English. Liunokas (2024) highlights that through this platform, students can receive instant feedback, which is crucial to correct mistakes, reinforce learning, and improve their performance in real time. Thus, technology not only becomes an assessment resource but also a bridge for active and meaningful learning, helping students to consolidate their oral expression and other language skills in a digital environment that is natural and stimulating for them.

In today's digital age, leveraging online platforms has become essential for enhancing language learning, especially in virtual classrooms. This research focuses on the effectiveness of using some digital platforms for the purpose of improving speaking skills.

General Objective

Examine the effectiveness of digital platforms such as Vocaroo, Flipgrid, and Quizizz in enhancing students' speaking skills within virtual classrooms, analyzing student engagement, learning outcomes, and platform-specific features that support oral expression.

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Specific Objectives

1. Assess the impact of Vocaroo, Flipgrid, HelloTalk and Quizizz on students' confidence, fluency, and pronunciation through surveys and performance-based evaluations.

2. Analyze student feedback on the usability and interactivity of each platform to determine which features most effectively promote speaking practice in virtual learning environments.

3. Compare the overall effectiveness of Vocaroo, Flipgrid, HelloTalk and Quizizz in improving speaking skills by measuring student performance metrics and engagement levels across these platforms.

Scope and Limitations

This research focuses on the use of digital platforms to improve speaking skills in virtual classrooms among students in Babahoyo, Ecuador. The study will examine the effectiveness of these platforms in enabling speaking, measuring outcomes through performance assessments, and student surveys. It will target students at various educational levels, with the goal of gathering information about their experiences with these digital tools and their impact on language learning. The research will provide recommendations to educators on best practices for embedding technology in language teaching to promote oral proficiency.

Despite the potential benefits of this study, several limitations may affect the results. First, energy reliability poses a significant challenge, as Ecuador faces frequent power outages that can disrupt online learning and limit student access to digital platforms. This problem is particularly prevalent in rural areas of the city of Babahoyo, where students may not have consistent electricity or high-quality Internet connections. As a result, some students may not be able to fully participate in the platforms or complete the required assessments, which could bias the data.

In addition, the research may be limited by participants' varying levels of digital literacy and familiarity with the platforms, which could affect their ability to effectively use these tools

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for language practice. Finally, the study will focus primarily on a specific geographic and demographic area, which may affect the generalizability of the results to broader populations or to other regions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research adopts a mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of digital platforms, specifically Vocaroo, Flipgrid, HelloTalk, and Quizizz, in improving speaking skills among intermediate-level students at the Language Center of the Technical University of Babahoyo. The study will involve a group of 80 students enrolled in the 4th level of English, with an intermediate proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference in the regulations of the Language Center. In addition, it was conducted over a six-week experimental period, which belongs to the first period of the class, which will allow us to know the impact of these platforms on the development of speaking proficiency.

Participants

Participants will be 80 students who have demonstrated a basic knowledge of the English language by belonging to the fourth of fifth levels. This cohort will provide a representative sample to assess the impact of digital tools on oral skills.

Data Collection

A structured questionnaire will be administered to collect quantitative data on students' experiences with each platform. The survey will include 8 questions to assess skills development, effectiveness of language skills, platform preference, and improvements in pronunciation and speaking practice attributed to the use of Vocaroo, Flipgrid, HelloTalk, Quizizz, and Zoom. In addition, 2 open-ended questions will allow students to provide qualitative feedback on their experiences with the platforms, focusing on ease of use, interactivity, and specific features that facilitated their speaking practice. This mixed-method

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approach aims to offer a comprehensive view of how digital platforms can support language proficiency development.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the surveys will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and correlations between the use of digital platforms and improvements in speaking skills. Descriptive statistics will summarize the responses, while inferential statistics may be employed to assess the significance of the findings. Qualitative data from open-ended survey responses will also be analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and insights into students' experiences and their perception of each platform's effectiveness in fostering speaking skills.

RESULTS

Results are organized by question and analyzed from quantitative and qualitative perspectives, with tables and graphs outlining key data and patterns.
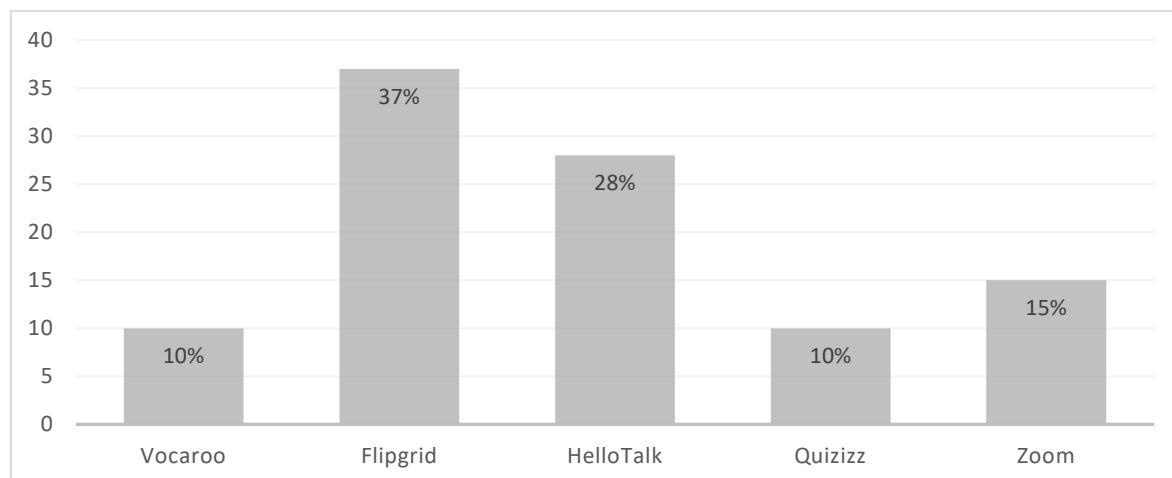
Table 1

Digital Platforms used for improving Speaking skills

Platforms	Student respondents	Percentages
Vocaroo	8	10
Flipgrid	30	37
HelloTalk	22	28
Quizizz	8	10
Zoom	12	15
Total	**80**	**100**

Note. Table 1 displays the distribution of student respondents across different digital platforms with their respective percentages.

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Graphic 1

Rates of each Digital platform for improving Speaking skills

Note. Graphic 1 displays the percentages of each platform used in speaking practice, which reflects the portion of the total respondents.

Analyses 1

According to the results of Table 1, the data reveal that Flipgrid apps are the most widely used platform among students for enhancing speaking skills, with 37% of 30 respondents. Next, HelloTalk, as the second most popular platform, got 28% of the 22 respondents. Likely, students are convinced that both apps emphasize language exchange and have real-time conversational practice. In contrast, Zoom meetings rank as the third with 15% of 12 respondents. Finally, Vocaroo and Quizizz are each used by 10% of the 8 respondents. Vocaroo only acts as a voice recorder, and Quizizz provides interactive exercises; these tools appear to be less central for speaking skill development because they do not require oral production as such but rather speaking under repetition or prior preparation, as is the case with Vocaroo.

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Table 2

Digital Platforms provide limited Speaking practice

Platforms	Student respondents	Percentages
Vocaroo	42	52
Flipgrid	0	0
HelloTalk	0	0
Quizizz	30	38
Zoom	8	10
Total	**80**	**100**

Note. Table 2 shows the distribution of student respondents across the digital platforms that provide limited speaking practice.

Graphic 2

Rates at which Digital Platforms provide limited Speaking practice
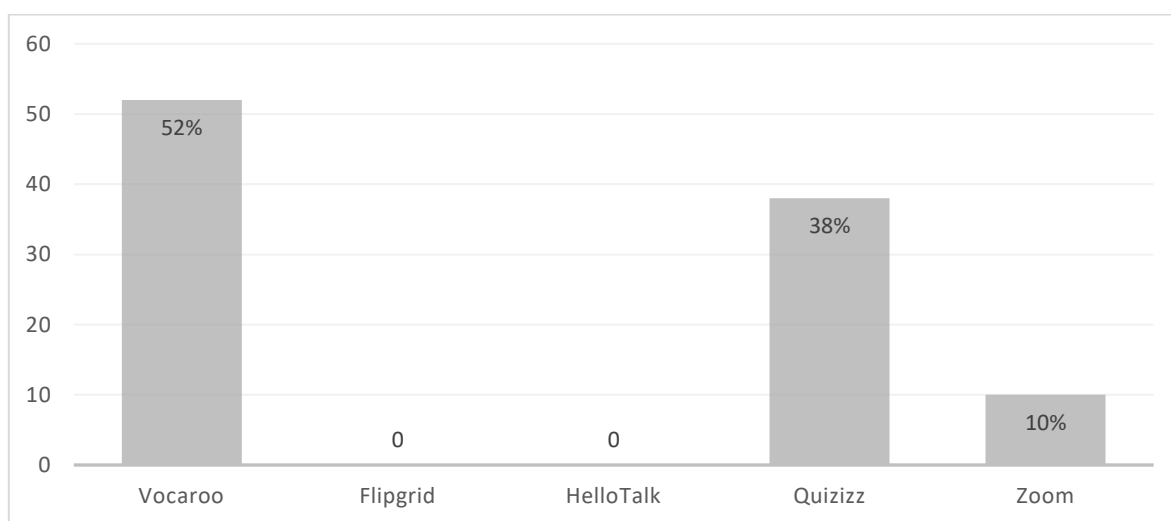
Note. Graphic 2 shows the percentages of which of the digital platforms are limited for speaking practice.

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Analyses 2

The data from Table 2 shows that Vocaroo is the most limited platform for improving speaking skills because students can interact with others, with 52% of 42 respondents. Vocaroo's audio recording is valued more for practicing pronunciation, clarity, and fluency. Quizizz is the second app with the most limitations because it got 38% of the 30 respondents. These apps offer speaking practice indirectly through some verbal responses or collaborative activities that incorporate spoken elements. Next, Zoom is considered limited for speaking practice by 10% of 8 respondents; it needs live communication, and is a useful tool for practicing speaking in virtual classrooms. Finally, Flipgrid and HelloTalk report 0%.

Table 3

Digital Platforms for live discussions or debates

Platforms	Student respondents	Percentages
Vocaroo	0	0
Flipgrid	28	35
HelloTalk	13	16
Quizizz	6	8
Zoom	33	41
Total	**80**	**100**

Note. Table 3 presents the distribution of student respondents about which digital platforms support live discussions or debates.

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Graphic 3

Rates of which Digital Platforms support live discussions or debates
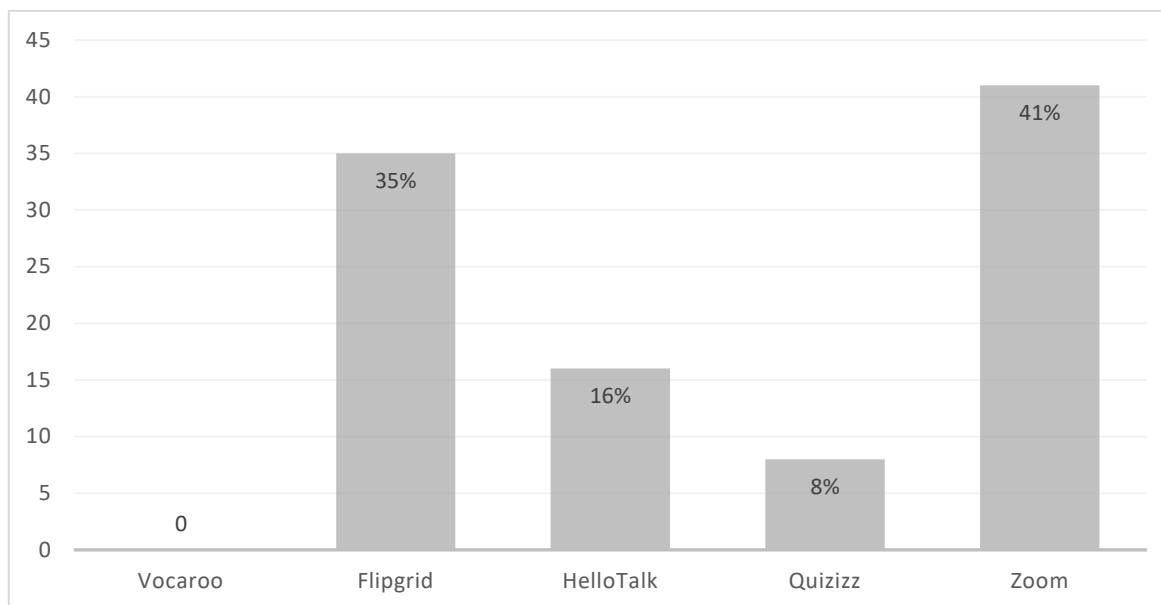
Note. Graphic 3 presents the percentages of which of the five digital platforms are for live discussions and debate.

Analyses 3

The data indicates that Zoom is the most favored platform for live discussions or debates, with 41% of 33 respondents. Zoom provides real-time video and audio, face-to-face interactions that closely simulate in-person discussions, breakout rooms, and screen sharing. Flipgrid ranks second, with 35% of 28 respondents, which indicates that this platform is useful for live discussion or debates, too. Participants can interact with others by responding to each other's videos, thus fostering an interactive environment. HelloTalk ranks third, with 16% of 13 respondents, likely due to its emphasis on language exchange and conversational practice.

Next, Quizizz was chosen only by 8% of 6 respondents, which indicates that it is less commonly used for live discussions or debates because students cannot have a conversational

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exchange. That is, it does not meet the needs of creating debates or discussion topics. But it is an application that helps to develop the basic elements of speech, such as pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Finally, Vocaroo was not selected by any respondents, indicating that it is not perceived as an effective live discussion. Vocaroo acts more as individual practice rather than interactive practice.

Table 4

Digital Platforms are great for real conversations

Platforms	Student respondents	Percentages
Vocaroo	0	0
Flipgrid	22	27
HelloTalk	38	48
Quizizz	0	0
Zoom	20	25
Total	**80**	**100**

Note. Table 4 displays the distribution of student respondents about which digital platforms were great for real conversations.

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Graphic 4

Rates of which Digital Platforms were great for real conversations
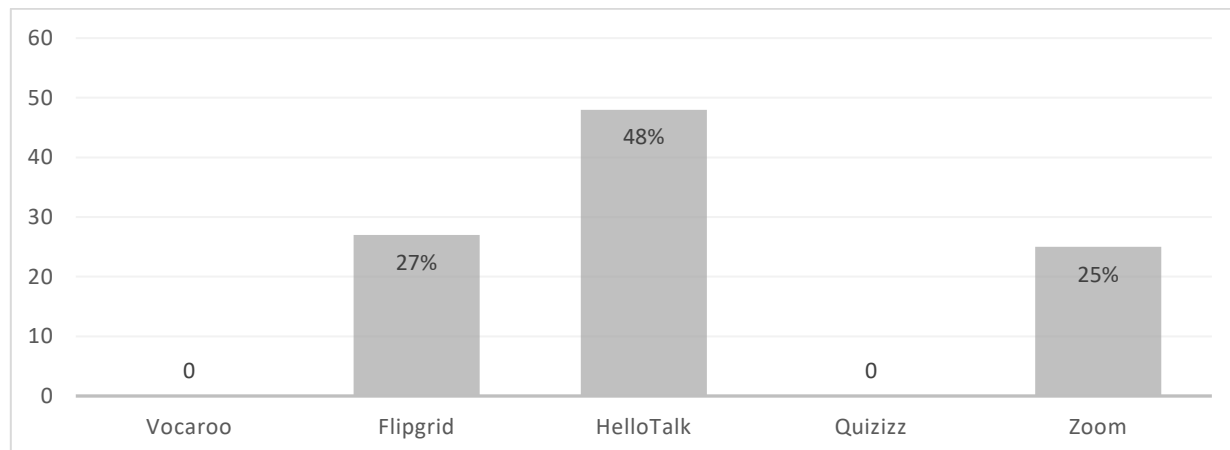
Note. Graphic 4 displays the percentages of which of the five digital platforms are more for real conversations.

Analyses 4

Based on survey results of question 4, HelloTalk showed the highest number of students, with 48% of 38 respondents. Results reflect that HelloTalk is designed for language exchange and facilitates direct interaction with native speakers, and the majority of students felt really happy to have this experience. Next, Flipgrid and Zoom were the second and third most preferred platforms. Flipgrid with 27% of 22 respondents and zoom with 25% of 20 respondents. Both platforms reflect similar results, which suggests they are moderately popular for conversational practice through the video response feature and live video.

About Vocaroo and Quizizz platforms received no votes, which shows that students likely do not view these as suitable for meaningful conversational practice. Students confirm that Vocaroo has limited use of speaking practice and does not connect any real-time conversations. Quizizz got 0, too, similar because students tested having more focus on grammar and vocabulary than dialogue or conversation. In conclusion, these results

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demonstrate a clear preference for digital tools on the part of the group of students surveyed, belonging to the fourth level.
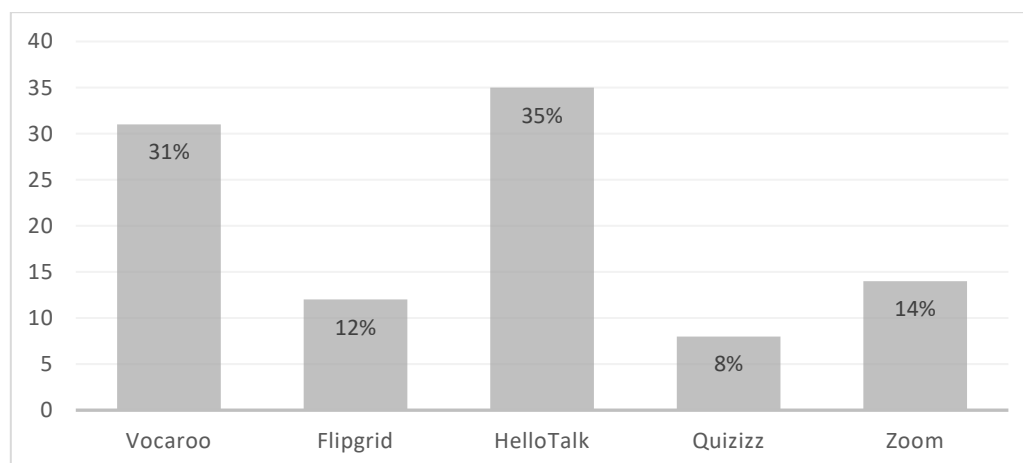
Table 5

Digital Platforms help practice pronunciation effectively

Platforms	Student respondents	Percentages
Vocaroo	25	31
Flipgrid	10	12
HelloTalk	28	35
Quizizz	6	8
Zoom	11	14
Total	**80**	**100**

Note. Table 5 shows the distribution of student respondents about which digital platforms help more with the practice of pronunciation.

Graphic 5

Rates of which Digital Platforms help practice pronunciation more effectively

Note. Graphic 5 shows the percentages of which of the five digital platforms help more with pronunciation.

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Analyses 5

According to the results of Table 5, HelloTalk was rated the highest, with 35% of 28 respondents finding it effective for pronunciation practice. This preference suggests that students find real-time interactions with native speakers, and this led to practicing beforehand the words, phrases, or questions for a better understanding of the conversation. Then, Vocaroo is the second most preferred, with 31% of 25 respondents. Students confirm that Vocaroo helps them with self-assessment and pronunciation refinement through specific sounds and rhythm.

Next, Zoom only received 14% of the 11 respondents. It is likely that Students do not find it useful for practicing pronunciation because it offers video conferencing, where participants should already have prior knowledge about fluency and pronunciation to achieve more active communication than pronunciation practice. Flipgrid got 12% of 10 respondents, which is the same as Zoom. It requires previous preparation for recording, since the correct pronunciation and intonation reflect a good understanding of what is spoken. Finally, Quizizz had the lowest rating, with only 8% of the 6 students' responses. Maybe, it is expected since Quizizz is more used for assessments of grammar and vocabulary rather than language production.

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Table 6

Digital Platforms are easy to access and navigate

Platforms	Student respondents	Percentages
Vocaroo	33	41
Flipgrid	8	10
HelloTalk	11	14
Quizizz	13	16
Zoom	15	19
Total	**80**	**100**

Note. Table 6 presents the distribution of student respondents about which digital platforms are easier to access and navigate.

Graphic 6

Rates of which Digital Platforms are easy to access and navigate
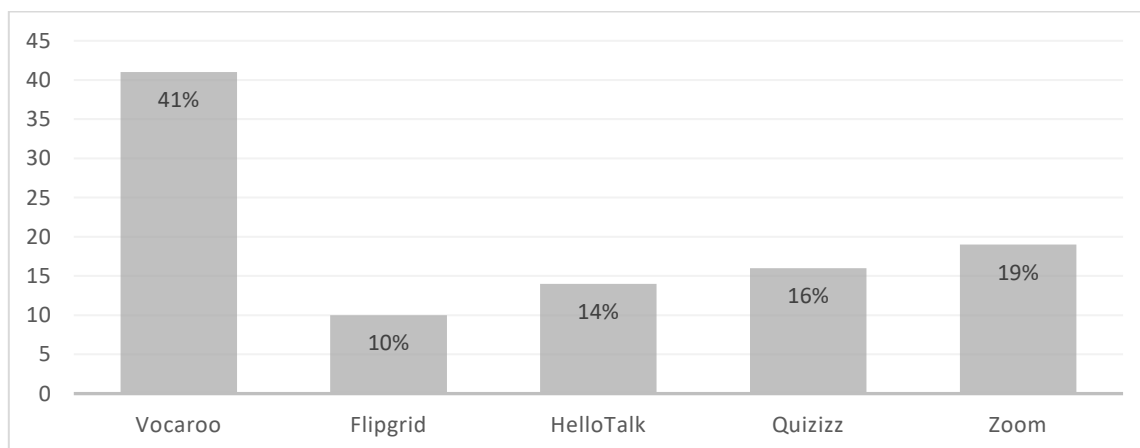
Note. Graphic 6 shows the percentages of which of the five digital platforms were easier to access and navigate by students.

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Analyses 6

Results based on Table 6, Vocaroo stands out as the most accessible and easiest to navigate platform, with 41% of 33 respondents who chose it as the easiest platform to use. Zoom was also chosen by 19% of 15 respondents. Likely, it is because Zoom is used for virtual classes by Students from the Language Center, and they know about breakout rooms and screen sharing. Then, Quizizz got 16% of 13 students, which shows moderate accessibility.

Next, HelloTalk was only chosen by 14% of 11 respondents, indicating that it is complex for some learners due to the similarity of social networks and the variety of functions for linguistic exchange, such as profile browsing, messaging, and feedback systems. Finally, Flipgrid received the lowest rating with only 10% of 8 respondents. Perhaps this is due to the type of design that Flipgrid presents, such as recording and uploading videos, which can be cumbersome for students who are not used to this type of platform.

Table 7

Students' enjoyment of Digital Platforms for speaking practice

Platforms	Student respondents	Percentages
Vocaroo	20	25
Flipgrid	16	20
HelloTalk	28	35
Quizizz	8	10
Zoom	8	10
Total	**80**	**100**

Note. Table 7 exhibits the distribution of student respondents about which digital platforms the students enjoy most.

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Graphic 7

Rating Digital Platforms by Students' enjoyment for speaking practice
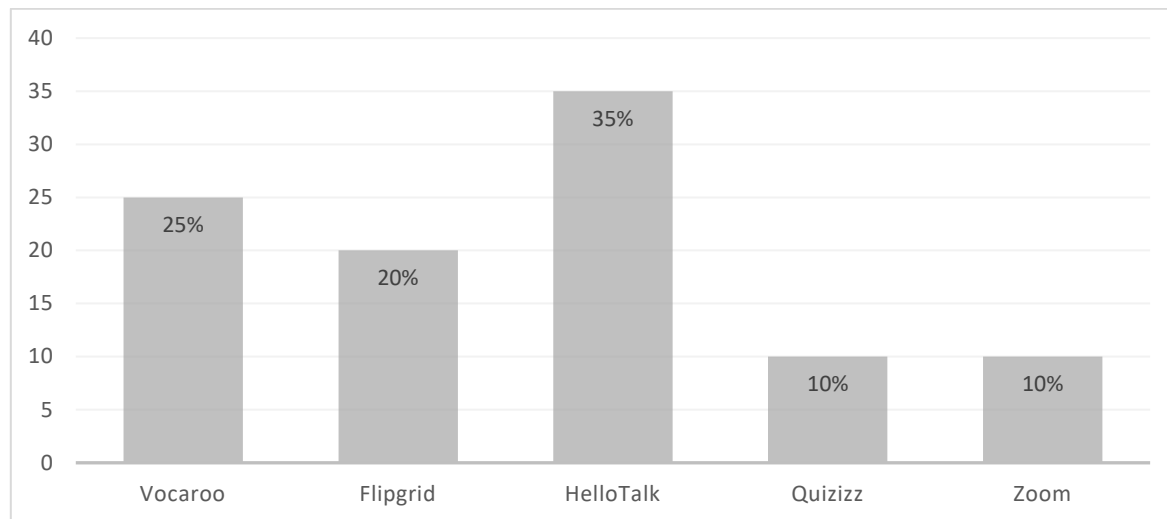
Note. Graphic 7 exhibits the percentages of which of the five digital platforms students enjoy more.

Analyses 7

According to the results of the question about Students' enjoyment of using Digital Platforms for speaking practice, HelloTalk was the highest engagement, with 35% of 28 students. It suggests that these apps might provide features that resonate well with students. Next, Vocaroo got 25% of 20 students who confirmed that they had enjoyed using it, which might appeal due to its simple voice recording element, allowing students to focus on pronunciation without any complexity. Flipgrid was the third app that the students enjoyed the least because it got 20% of the 16 students, which reflects that students may prefer to use simpler applications.

Lastly, the least used were Quizizz and Zoom, each with 10% of 8 respondents. Quizizz may be less preferred for speaking due to its primary design for quizzes with focus more on reinforcement and practice of grammar and vocabulary (only the paid version prioritizes the use of audio and video), while Zoom could be seen as a formal platform used more for live

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classroom sessions, some students are self-conscious in the sessions and do not tend to open up easily in practice.

Table 8

*Developing Skills through Various Digital Platforms*

Platforms	Platform	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
	Vocaroo			30	
	Flipgrid			50	
	HelloTalk		40	40	
	Quizizz	20			20
	Zoom		20	30	

Note. Table 8 presents the distribution of student respondents about which skills students practiced more on each platform.

Graphic 8

Frequency of Digital Platform Use to Develop English Language Skills

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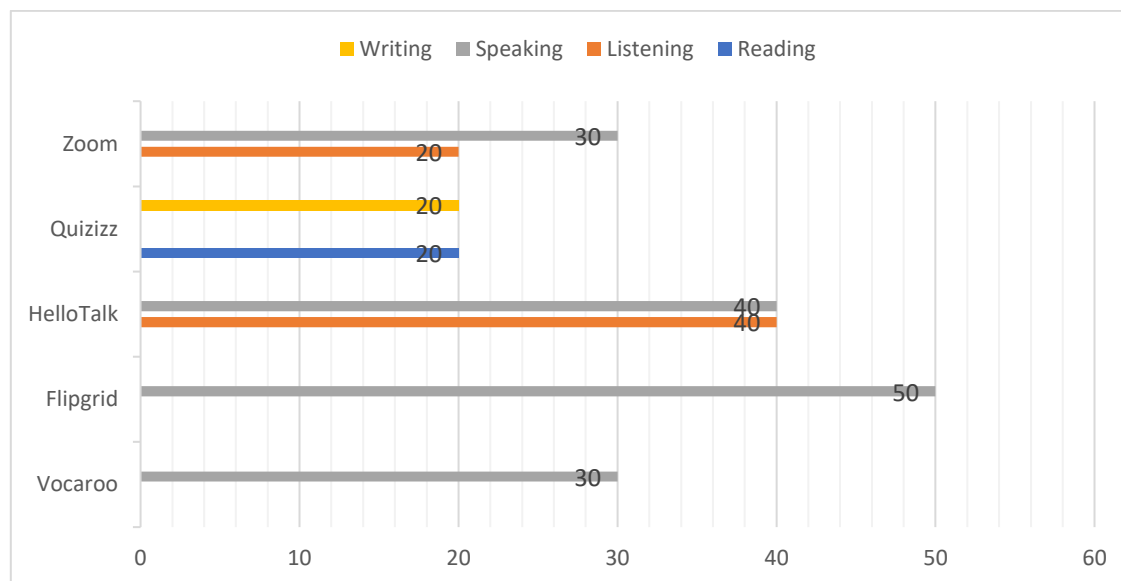
Note. Graphic 8 presents the percentages of which of the five digital platforms students practiced more according to the different skills.

Analyses 8

This Question examines how each platform contributes to the development of specific language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing based on student responses. The data listed below shows which skills students associate most with each platform, capturing their perception of each platform's strengths in language learning experience:

As the first platform used, *Vocaroo* obtained 30 respondents in agreement with *speaking* practice, where students confirmed that it was useful to practice speaking without the need for presentation of the person, since they only record the voice, which helped to achieve confidence and therefore improve *speaking* skills. Follow, *Flipgrid* is highly favored for speaking practice, with 50 respondents. This is perhaps because of Flipgrid's video and subtitle-based format, which seems to encourage oral participation and responses, in which students are likely to feel more committed to speaking on camera, imitating a conversational environment.

About *HelloTalk*, it shows a balance between listening and speaking with 40 respondents. the findings validate that students develop both listening and speaking skills. It is worth noting that Hello Talk's interactive and social format promotes both speaking and listening because it allows for real-time or recorded interactions with native speakers, which helps students practice speaking in authentic settings. Results by respondents testify that *Quizizz* was associated with reading and writing, both skills received 20 responses. The data indicates students use Quizizz only to engage with reading comprehension and short-answer responses, reflecting a focus on passive skills rather than active conversation.

Ultimately, *Zoom* meetings are mostly connected to listening, with 20 responses, and speaking, with 30 responses. Students confirm that through Zoom, they develop listening and speaking skills during synchronous classes because that is where the emphasis is on live reactions.

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In conclusion to the results obtained, we briefly describe that the digital platforms used in this study allowed more speaking practice, followed by listening, and to a lesser extent, reading and writing. Data confirm that these tools mainly favored the development of oral production, highlighting the interest in activities where they can express themselves in an active way. This trend shows that platforms such as Flipgrid and HelloTalk are especially useful for encouraging speaking and listening practice, while other tools such as Quizizz achieved greater connection with reading and writing, although less frequently.

Analyses of Open-ended questions

The following are the pros and cons pointed out by the respondents on the frequent use of the five digital platforms through 2 open-ended questions. This made it possible to get a closer view of the opinions, experiences, and challenges that students faced during the six weeks of experimentation. Among the positive and negative aspects, the participants appreciated *Vocaroo* for its simplicity and speed in generating shareable links, which facilitated the personal review of the audio. However, its main disadvantage is the lack of automatic feedback, as the feedback depends on the teacher. It also had compatibility difficulties with Zoom, which sometimes resulted in poor quality recordings.

Flipgrid, although difficult to use initially, stood out for its automatic subtitles, which facilitated self-assessment throughout the process and promoted pre-preparation. Its main disadvantage was its dependence on a stable connection, which in some cases limited its use. However, the ability to respond on video encouraged more dynamic interaction between peers. In contrast, *HelloTalk* helped gain confidence by allowing practice with native speakers in a safe environment, but some students experienced nerves and a need for additional preparation to ensure effective communication.

While Quizizz, although more focused on grammar and vocabulary, the teacher recently integrated audio and video, forcing students to answer in English, was a bit complicated due to a lack of familiarity with it; however, connection problems affected the experience for some users. Finally, Zoom facilitated real-time oral interventions and promoted collaboration

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through the group rooms. Although challenging, the use of the camera encouraged prior preparation of the students, although connection difficulties limited participation in some sessions.

DISCUSION

The research by Adem and Berkessa (2022) titled "*A case study of EFL teachers' practice of teaching speaking skills vis-à-vis the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).*" aligns with this study in its emphasis on using technological applications for teaching a second language. However, while this study primarily focuses on improving oral skills, the cited research addresses all areas of language development, including writing, grammar, reading, communication, oral expression, vocabulary, and listening. The results of the cited research demonstrate a significant overall improvement across these areas using digital platforms.

In conclusion, the findings underscore the need to transition from traditional teaching methods to a blended learning approach. It is essential that the teachers seek on their own to train in digital literacy so they can effectively integrate digital platforms into the classroom and guide students in using these tools for specific educational purposes. Working with digital platforms is particularly relevant in today's context, as most students have access to mobile phones and the internet. However, one notable limitation is that not all students own 4G-capable devices, which could somewhat hinder equitable access to learning.

According to the study conducted by Liunokas (2024), which investigated the use of the Quizizz application in teaching speaking skills to first-semester university students over six sessions, a similarity can be found with this work, as both studies analyze technological platforms, including Quizizz. However, while the results of this study do not show a significant impact on the development of speaking skills, the cited study demonstrates significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores after the implementation of the treatment, confirming its effectiveness in improving oral competence.

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It is important to highlight that success in enhancing language skills depends on the specific area that is intended to be reinforced, as well as having a clear objective. In this regard, it is the teacher's responsibility to select and adapt the tools and activities that align with the development of the skill in question, in this case, speaking skills. Additionally, it is worth noting that Quizizz, with its audio and video activities, stands out as a useful tool for students to practice and strengthen their skills, particularly speaking, by utilizing these interactive resources.

Another study related to the use of "Voice recording applications for the development of oral fluency in L2", conducted at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, was carried out by López Infante (2022). In this study, the researcher worked with three voice recording applications in the classroom: Vocaroo, Voki, and VoiceThread. This study shares similarities with the present research in aspects such as the use of Vocaroo, which stands out for its easy web access, it's free of charge, the absence of mandatory registration, and the lack of a time limit for recording. In addition, both studies employed a quantitative approach.

However, there are significant differences. While López Infante's study assessed oral fluency using the standardized PET test, which follows specific phases to measure this skill, the present research focused on the curricular development of a didactic unit. Nevertheless, both studies share the objective of improving oral skills, especially fluency in L2.

As for the comparison of results, López Infante's study reveals an analysis based on metrics that measure the rate of articulation of syllables and words over a particular period, which made it possible to evaluate and note a significant improvement in fluency by integrating these applications into practice. On the other hand, the present research also demonstrates progress in oral skills through the use of Vocaroo, as well as a remarkable acceptance of this tool by the students. In summary, both studies demonstrated that voice recording applications are effective tools for improving speaking skills and fluency in L2. Although each study had a particular focus and objective, both studies highlight the value of these apps as useful resources for teachers in the classroom and for learners, enabling them to expand their

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knowledge and obtain positive results in oral production, thus facilitating more fluent communication in the language.

Another relevant study is "The Application of Flipgrid in an EFL Classroom" by Majors (2024), who emphasizes in his research the use of Flipgrid and its perceived usefulness by students from the perspectives of aptitude and perception. As in this study, the results show that students viewed Flipgrid as an easy-to-use tool, useful for self-reflection, and that they almost always showed a positive attitude towards its implementation. They also built confidence in using Flipgrid to practice oral English, interacted with other peers, and experienced a stress-free learning environment.

As for the less favorable aspects, it was identified that some students faced technical difficulties related to an unstable internet connection and outdated software on their devices. However, it is concluded that these problems can be solved through the use of a network with high connectivity speed and proper updating of technological devices. Despite these limitations, Flipgrid emerges as an effective platform for the development of oral skills, promotes social interaction, and collaborative learning in the English as a foreign language classroom. Its design allows each student to stand out individually by having his or her moment in the spotlight, which fosters confidence and motivation to actively participate.

Lastly, the results of the study entitled "Students' perception of using Zoom Meeting for online learning in teaching English speaking skills in times of COVID-19", conducted by Putri and Suryaman (2022), stand out. This study confirms that, according to educators and teachers, Zoom Meeting is a more user-friendly communication tool compared to other online videoconferencing applications. The authors emphasize that "teachers can use the Zoom Meeting application to teach English, especially for teaching speaking," stating that this is possible if the teacher continuously interacts with students in English, which promotes students to be more active in improving their speaking skills.

A similarity between this study and the present research lies in the fact that both focus on collecting students' perceptions of the use of Zoom, assessing their acceptance or rejection.

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However, neither includes an in-depth statistical analysis specifically oriented to the improvement of Speaking skills. Furthermore, there are no studies that exclusively explore Zoom's effectiveness in boosting this particular skill. Instead, the results only reflect that Zoom is well accepted for teaching and learning various language skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking, but it does not focus exclusively on the development of speaking proficiency.

In conclusion, after comparing the similarities and differences among studies that also analyze the use of digital platforms, the importance of leveraging the variety of available technological tools and aligning them with specific educational objectives becomes evident. In the case of this research, the main goal was to enhance speaking skills, a fundamental ability for achieving effective communication. The strategic use of these platforms allows students to develop their oral competencies flexibly, overcoming space and time limitations. Therefore, integrating appropriate digital platforms not only facilitates autonomous learning but also promotes greater confidence and fluency in language use.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital platforms like Vocaroo, Flipgrid, HelloTalk, and Quizizz effectively improved students' confidence, fluency and pronunciation in virtual classrooms. Performance-based evaluations and survey responses indicated that Vocaroo and Quizizz were instrumental in fostering fluency and pronunciation skills through consistent and flexible practice. And as for Flipgrid and HelloTalk, with their interactive videos and conversational features, they significantly increased learner confidence and encouraged active participation. Overall, these platforms created an engaging environment that encouraged oral production, with a focus on speaking and listening skills, which eventually contributed to a considerable improvement in learners' virtual speaking abilities.

The second objective was met through student feedback, which revealed that the ease of use and interactivity of each platform played a key role in fostering speaking practice in virtual

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learning environments. Flipgrid and HelloTalk were noted for their high effectiveness, with Flipgrid's video responses and Hello Talk's conversational interchanges providing a dynamic and less formal context for learners to practice pronunciation and express themselves naturally. Vocaroo, valued for its simplicity, permitted learners to work independently and at their own pace, focusing on pronunciation without the pressure of a live audience. Although Quizizz primarily encouraged reading, vocabulary reinforcement, and writing, it indirectly benefited language comprehension, important elements for speaking practice.

The results on the third objective reveal that each platform contributes uniquely to improving speaking, highlighting their various strengths. Flipgrid and HelloTalk were particularly effective in fostering real-time interactive speaking activities between peers and native speakers, which helped build learners' confidence and fluency. Vocaroo, meanwhile, offered an environment focused on pronunciation practice that allowed learners to reflect on their speech without the added complexity of video or live interactions. This diversity allowed learners to participate at their own comfort level, suggesting that a mix of platforms that cater to specific skills, such as speaking, helps develop confidence, fluency, and pronunciation. All of these elements are critical to optimizing English language engagement and effectiveness in oral practice.

In conclusion, leveraging a combination of digital platforms can provide a balanced approach to speech development in virtual classrooms. The results underscore the value of incorporating platform-specific features that align with pedagogical goals, suggesting that combining video-based, audio-only, and interactive tools with text can help meet diverse learning needs. In addition, learners had stimulating experiences when working more with platforms focused on developing oral expression and also listening comprehension, albeit indirectly, but this skill is key to reaching understanding and interacting.

It is worth mentioning that challenges were also faced from working with various digital platforms, as many learners were unfamiliar with the technology. This often led to difficulties navigating the tools and required additional time for onboarding and technical assistance. In

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addition, frequent Internet connection problems compounded these difficulties, disrupting the flow of classes and causing frustration for both students and teachers.

Suggestions

To maximize the development of oral skills, future studies could explore the integration of additional platforms or the incorporation of functions that provide real-time feedback on pronunciation, fluency, and intonation elements. These tools could significantly improve oral communication proficiency by allowing learners to get immediate and specific direction, which is often critical to improving their skills. In addition, leveraging unique techniques and strategies tailored to speaking will foster communicative competence more effectively in the classroom. Prioritizing speaking as a fundamental skill would not only benefit individual students but would also help build a college community with high second language proficiency, promoting both academic and professional growth.

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