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Flipgrid: a video app for virtual exchange, propinquity, and language learning

Pilar Concheiro
Olivia Espejel
Joan-Tomàs Pujolà

Abstract

In virtual exchanges, the first contact between students is a key moment since it determines the way in which students will interact with each other throughout the learning process. The *Flipgrid* app can be a useful tool to develop a first contact in both telecollaboration projects and in digital educational contexts. The objective of this article is to explore the technical, communicative and affective strategies that the students who participated in the HI-UB telecollaboration project during the spring semester of 2019 used in their first interactions to achieve proximity. The data were obtained both from the video recordings made in *Flipgrid* by 22 students of the Master's program of the University of Barcelona and 11 students of Spanish as a foreign language from the University of Iceland, as well as their reflections. The results show that this first asynchronous video meeting was useful, as it helped them reduce anxiety, provided a good emotional atmosphere and encouraged their motivation towards the subsequent tasks of the telecollaboration project.

Keywords: Flipgrid. Video app. Propinquity. Language learning. Virtual exchange.

Pilar Concheiro
Háskóli Íslands (HI)
E-*mail*: mdc@hi.is
https://orcid.org/ 0000-0001-9517-4086

Olivia Espejel
Universitat de Barcelona (UB)
E-*mail*: olivia.espejel@ub.edu
https://orcid.org/ 0000-0001-9370-3212

Joan-Tomàs Pujolà
Universitat de Barcelona (UB)
E-*mail*: jtpujola@ub.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8664-432X

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Resumo

***Flipgrid*: um *app* de vídeo para o intercâmbio virtual, a proximidade e a aprendizagem de línguas**

Nos intercâmbios virtuais, o primeiro contato entre os estudantes é um momento chave, já que determina a forma como os estudantes se relacionarão entre si durante todo o processo de aprendizagem. O aplicativo *Flipgrid* pode ser uma ferramenta útil para desenvolver um primeiro contato tanto em projetos de telecolaboração como em contextos educativos digitais. O objetivo desse artigo é explorar as estratégias técnicas, comunicativas e afetivas que os estudantes que participaram em o projeto de telecolaboração HI-UB durante o semestre de primavera de 2019 utilizaram em suas primeiras interações para alcançar a proximidade. Os dados foram obtidos tanto das gravações em vídeo realizadas em *Flipgrid* por 22 alunos do programa de Máster da Universidade de Barcelona e 11 estudantes de espanhol como língua estrangeira da Universidade de Islândia, como de suas reflexões. Os resultados mostram que este primeiro encontro assíncrono em vídeo lhes foi útil, já que os ajudou a reduzir a ansiedade, proporcionou uma boa atmosfera emocional e fomentou sua motivação às tarefas posteriores do projeto de telecolaboração.

Palavras-chave:
Flipgrid.
App de vídeo.
Proximidade.
Aprendizagem de línguas.
Intercâmbio virtual.

Resumen

***Flipgrid*, una vídeo *app* para el intercambio virtual, la propincuidad y el aprendizaje de lenguas**

En los intercambios virtuales, el primer contacto entre los estudiantes es un momento clave, ya que determina la forma en la que los estudiantes se relacionarán entre sí durante todo el proceso de aprendizaje. La aplicación *Flipgrid* puede resultar una herramienta útil para desarrollar una primera toma de contacto tanto en proyectos de telecolaboración como en contextos educativos digitales. El objetivo de este artículo es explorar las estrategias técnicas, comunicativas y afectivas que los estudiantes que participaron en el proyecto de telecolaboración HI-UB durante el semestre de primavera de 2019 utilizaron en sus primeras interacciones para lograr la proximidad. Los datos se obtuvieron tanto de las grabaciones en video realizadas en *Flipgrid* por 22 estudiantes del programa de Máster de la Universidad de Barcelona y 11 estudiantes de español como lengua extranjera de la Universidad de Islandia, como de sus reflexiones. Los resultados muestran que este primer encuentro asincrónico en vídeo les resultó útil, ya que les ayudó a reducir la ansiedad, proporcionó una buena atmósfera emocional y fomentó su motivación hacia las tareas posteriores del proyecto de telecolaboración.

Palabras clave:
Flipgrid.
Vídeo app.
Propincuidad.
Aprendizaje de lenguas.
Intercambio virtual**.**

Introduction

In any social interaction, emotions play a fundamental role and influence our behaviour and reactions (MARINETTI, MOORE, LUCAS & PARKINSON, 2011). In virtual exchanges, as is the case of a didactic proposal that takes place in a synchronous learning environment in which the exchange is carried out one by one, all kinds of feelings and emotions mix with each other and with different levels of intensity (CHEN & LEE, 2011). Students may experience anxiety due to an online encounter with someone unknown, but at the same time, they may feel excited about meeting a person with a different culture. In contexts of learning a foreign language, we must also take into account the apprehension that students may feel when faced with this type of encounter in a language that is not their own (HORWITZ, HORWITZ & COPE, 1986) and that may be even intensified due to the fact of having the meeting within a digital environment. Lack of language proficiency can trigger a feeling of insecurity that may have a significantly negative impact on the learning process (HORWITZ et al., 1986; DEWALE, 2013, DÖRNYEI and RYAN, 2015). Therefore, the initial contacts of students in virtual exchanges are key to the success of any telecollaboration program, since they determine the way in which students will relate to each other during the process of performing collaborative tasks that will benefit learning from both parties.

The HI - UB telecollaboration project

The context in which this study is carried out is a virtual exchange program (DOOLY, 2017; O'DOWD, 2018) between teacher trainees of Spanish enrolled in a master's degree at the University of Barcelona (UB) and students of Spanish as a foreign language at the University of Iceland (HI). This telecollaboration project between these universities has been running since the academic year 2017-2018. This research is part of the first task of the 2018-2019 edition in which 33 students took part: 22 from the UB and 11 from the HI.

In this project, the tutors from both universities assign different communicative tasks to their respective students which must be completed collaboratively using different communication channels (videoconferencing, instant messaging, etc.). The objectives of the project are multiple. Firstly, the development of digital competence is pursued in all participants, particularly those related to communication in digital media. On the other hand, Spanish students aim to achieve greater language skills in Spanish through exposure to the target language and also, they will have an opportunity for interaction that goes beyond the barriers of the formal classroom. At the same time, teacher trainees gain practice in teaching, specifically, in teaching competences for distance education. In addition, after each assignment students from both universities have to write a reflection that allows them to reflect upon their learning

process and about their general progress of the activity. The aim of these reflections is fundamentally to promote the autonomy of the learners and to develop their critical competence.

Task 1 and the use of Flipgrid

During the first task of the project, each student of Spanish at the HI had to contact two colleagues from the UB, to have a conversation in Spanish via videoconferencing. Since in previous editions of the project this task generated a lot of anxiety in both groups of participants, for the edition in which this research is framed, a previous task was proposed in the Flipgrid app. Flipgrid is a video discussion platform where teachers can create a digital space on a topic and students, using any mobile device, can upload short videos, from 15 seconds to 10 minutes, commenting on the topic in question. This pre-task aims to anticipate students for the first videoconferencing activity, both in terms of their emotions and their needs as learners.

In the 2018-2019 telecollaboration project, the UB students had to take the first step by introducing themselves and inviting the HI students to choose them as future learning partners. In turn, the HI students had to watch all the videos and record video response messages in Flipgrid to the three students with whom they had the most aspects in common. The tutors from both universities took into account the preferences expressed in Flipgrid to form groups made up of two members from the UB and one from the HI. The following week, HI students were asked to have a videoconference with their UB peers and to share personal photos related to different moments in their lives. The photos served as a thematic trigger for an icebreaker task which enabled the UB students also to conduct a needs analysis of the HI students to find out essential information for subsequent learning activities (level of Spanish, interests, experiences in Spanish-speaking countries, etc.).

Theoretical framework. Propinquity in digital video learning environments

The use of videos for the teaching and learning of foreign languages has been widely investigated (JENSEN and VINTHER, 1978; STEMPLESKI and TOMALIN, 1995; TSCHINER, 2011; PISARENKO, 2017; SHERMAN; 2003; VANDERPLANK, 2020) and their multiple advantages: helping to improve students' oral comprehension by combining the auditory and visual channels; providing input showing language in context; introducing authentic audiovisual material in the classroom; facilitating the practice of speaking strategies through the production of videos; and increasing their motivation and creativity.

Regarding the didactic exploitation of synchronous conversations by videoconferencing, Satar (2015) analyses online multimodal interactions and the use of non-verbal semiotic elements such as, for example, gestures, glances or proxemics as contextual clues that help generate meaning. The use of certain actions such as reciprocity, smiling, asking questions or continuing to talk beyond the demands of the

learning task is essential for videoconferencing communication in language learning. Likewise, the author highlights the importance of social presence (GARRISON & ANDERSON, 2003), a concept that is defined as follows:

> the ability to project one's personal identity in the online community so that she or he is perceived as a 'real' person and/or as progressing through the phases (1) acquiring a social identity, (2) having purposeful communication, and (3) building relationships. (ROURKE, ANDERSON, GARRISON & ARCHER, 2001, p.3).

Thus, social presence is considered a key element to enhance interaction and learning, since the sense of belonging to a learning community motivates students and reduces their levels of anxiety (GARRISON, ANDERSON & ARCHER, 1999). As part of that social presence in virtual exchanges there is a key element, the electronic propinquity, which has been described as the feeling of proximity, participation and presence in any digital communication environment that positively affects interaction (KORZENNY, 1978). According to Walther and Bazarova (2008), this type of proximity is strongly associated with satisfaction, communication effectiveness, and task achievement.

In digital environments, the electronic propinquity can be expressed and perceived differently depending on the channel. In chat services, for example, this e-propinquity can be provided through emojis or signs of "like" and "dislike". In audio-visual channels, image, gestures, and the use of avatars to represent the individual are all relatively new ways of making digital conversations closer and warmer.

Many of the recent research studies on the use of asynchronous video conversations with Flipgrid emphasize the suitability of this application to facilitate social interaction between students (STOSZKOWSKI, 2018), communication in distance learning (AGAN, ANDERSON, ATWOOD, CASAREZ, HERON and SELF, 2019) and to learn languages and promote intercultural exchanges (LEE, 2020). The purpose of this article, however, is to provide information about the strategies that enhance social presence and the necessary propinquity in a virtual exchange to achieve effective communication.

Social presence plays a determining role in showing identity in a video recording. In addition to the physical appearance or the way of dressing, personal spaces such as their homes, the city where they live or the institution where they study are not secondary in providing a message of who they really are. Showing all kinds of personal items and even sharing music relevant for them can reinforce the transmission of the message and personalize it.

Flipgrid has several characteristics that makes it easier for the user to reinforce their social presence and therefore, the message that they want to convey about their identity. For example, once the video is recorded, the user can take a photograph that will function as a cover; then, stickers, emojis and other icons can be added to that photo, allowing users to play with the image they want to present. The app also includes elements that foster propinquity: users in the grid can add "likes" to their favorite videos, as is done in many social networks; they can also use emojis in their names, and post their videos by tagging them using

hashtags. Last but not least, the app allows you to respond directly to the recorded videos, generating a conversational thread with brief interventions. The fact of being able to receive a video response is undoubtedly the most significant means to develop electronic propinquity in this application.

Methodology

This study is part of an exploratory-ethnographic research (MATTOS, 2011) in which a mixed-methods approach with a "QUAL → quan" sequential research design (DÖRNYEI, 2007, p. 169) have been applied. The main objective was to identify the technical, communication and affective strategies that the participants used in the first part of Task 1 of the HI-UB tele-collaboration project during the 2018-2019 edition by using the Flipgrid application. The research questions that are addressed in this study are detailed below.

Research questions

- What video communication strategies using Flipgrid were deployed by students with the aim of enhancing propinquity?
- How do students rate the strategies they used?
- To what extent are they aware of those that they did not use?
- How do they value the strategies that their classmates used?

Data collection and analysis methodology

The data were gathered, first of all, from the analysis of the Flipgrid recordings: 17 were made by the 22 UB students —some did the task in pairs— and 35 response videos were recorded by the 11 HI students. Subsequently, a template was prepared that included the pertinent strategies for this study, i.e. technical, communicative and affective strategies that served as the basis for the design of the Google Forms questionnaire. The function of this questionnaire was, on the one hand, to promote reflection and analysis among the group of teacher trainees at the UB regarding the communication strategies they had used and, on the other hand, to check to what extent those communication strategies had been used by HI students. Consequently, the questionnaire was adapted to each group: the one for UB students focused on how they used all these strategies to convey an effective message and the one for HI students focused on their opinion about the importance of these strategies in asynchronous video communication. Finally, the reflections that the students of both universities wrote after completing the task were also collected.

For the qualitative analysis of the videos, an intercoder agreement procedure was followed (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 345). First, each investigator independently identified and labelled the technical, communication, and affective strategies based on the jointly agreed template. Subsequently, the results

were pooled to compare and identify possible disagreements or lack of identification of strategies by any researcher, and thus increase the reliability of the analysis. Finally, these data were contrasted with the reflections provided by all the participating students, on the one hand, to identify if they had mentioned these strategies for any reason at all and, on the other hand, to provide information about their experience with the video recording task and to what extent it had influenced their learning process.

Questionnaires and template

Two questionnaires were devised in Google Form including the same items with the aim of helping both UB and HI students to identify their use of strategies in the video recordings. The template used for that purpose included the following categories:

1. Technical strategies
    a. Background
    b. Lighting
    c. Framing
    d. Focus
2. Communication strategies
    a. Tone
    b. Gestures
    c. Visual support
    d. Speech modification
    e. Flipgrid possibilities
    f. Verbal communication strategies
3. Affective strategies
    a. Personal significance of space
    b. Personal items shown
    c. Smile
    d. Humor
    e. Others

With regards to the UB questionnaire the items included a three-point Likert scale from "I have not taken it into account" to "I have exploited it well" to evaluate their own video recordings. HI students, however, had a simplified version in which they had to answer questions in relation to the strategies used by UB students in their videos and thus, the three-point Likert scale was transformed for each strategy from "I have not taken it into account" to "I have taken it very much into account" to choose a partner.

The purpose of both questionnaires was to prompt student reflection on the communicative potential of FlipGrid video recordings; and at the same time, it allowed the three tutors to collect data and learn about the students' perceptions of video communication strategies.

Student 's reflections

The students' reflections were obtained by the teacher trainers at the UB from the e-portfolios that they had to elaborate throughout the masters' degree to reflect on their own learning processes. HI students, meanwhile, had to write a reflection, previously guided by their teacher, to analyses their participation in the project tasks and what effect it had on their learning process.

Results

Firstly, the strategies used by the students in their videos are presented, then, the data with the reflections of the students on the use of these strategies and finally, the students' reflections on the task carried out in Flipgrid and how it influenced their learning process are analyzed.

Strategies used in the videos

In the Flipgrid task all the students used three types of strategies to a certain extent: technical, communication and affective. The objective of this classification was, first of all, to analyse what type of strategies they used to achieve an image of closeness or propinquity through which they showed their personal identity. Likewise, the study analyses if the students explored and exploited the possibilities offered by the app.

Technical strategies

After analyzing all the videos, it is evident that most of UB students intentionally chose a location to record their videos, although only a few explicitly used this as a significant resource to provide personal information. Some examples of those locations that they used as a significant background were the university campus, a classroom or their own bedrooms. However, only four of them mentioned explicitly their background during the video and how it related to their lives. Regarding the selection of the background, HI students did not realize how much information about them they could have communicated if they had taken into account the characteristics and significance of the place where they recorded their response videos. In general, HI students did not pay special attention to technical strategies and, therefore, did not take into consideration either aspects of lighting or the framing of the video. The selection of the background by both groups also determined the lighting used in the videos, which means that the students who decided to use exterior backgrounds were well lit, while those who ended up filming themselves inside

(two students from UB and one from HI) their faces appeared poorly lit in the videos. This technical aspect in the digital environment, which seems irrelevant at first, is of vital importance to achieve a good reception in communication with the interlocutor so the signs of non-verbal language and characteristics of face-to-face communication can be appreciated.

With regards to the way in which the students framed their videos, half of them used a vertical frame approach without taking into account that the horizontal format would have been more appropriate in this app. Only three of them made a dynamic video recording while walking; most of them used static videos with medium shots, typical of classic recordings as a television newscast.

To sum up, most students from both universities made limited use of technical strategies and did not take advantage of the full potential offered by the app. This may be due in part to the fact that none of the participants had used this particular app before and did not decide to explore its possibilities.

Communication strategies

Although students were asked to explore FlipGrid's specific communication capabilities on their own before recording their videos, the vast majority went no further than including a profile picture. For example, they did not use hashtags, "likes" or emojis to decorate their name or add additional features.

Communication strategies such as body language, the use of gestures and visual support were more evident among students in Barcelona. This may be due to their role as future teachers, but could also be related to a cultural difference in the way of showing emotions. Almost all UB students smiled openly and tried to send a positive and happy message. However, since they were addressing students of Spanish as a foreign language, some teacher trainees from UB should have paid more attention to their tone of voice: some of them spoke too quickly and used monotonous intonation, without emphasizing any words in particular.

Verbal communication strategies had the same aims: to foster proximity, to create social closeness, and to seek common ground. Therefore, speech intensifiers, invitations to visit their respective countries, and language structures to express their willingness to participate in the telecollaboration project are some of the strategies used by most of the participants.

With regard to these strategies and the data from the questionnaires, all HI students stated that, when recording their response videos, it was very relevant that their colleagues from the UB spoke slowly; in fact, half of them selected the option "I have taken it very much into account". 70% of HI students also considered the use of a clear and slightly monotonous tone of voice as a relevant factor in choosing a partner.

Affective strategies

Although the use of a significant background was considered a technical strategy, it is worth mentioning that this type of strategy also appeals to affective moves when an explicit mention of the background is reported in the video, as is the case of the four students mentioned above. On the other hand, some of them even included and displayed personal items such as jewelry, travel souvenirs or even their pets. The aim of including these personal items was, in addition to showing a part of their lives, to achieve that feeling of propinquity.

The affective strategy most used by UB students was the typical non-verbal sign of smile. Only three of them maintained a serious expression on their faces while recording, a characteristic that the three researchers clearly recognized and that was surprising since it does not facilitate propinquity, a key communication goal for this type of activity.

With regard to HI students, the majority recorded their response video indoors and did not resort to using location as a representative element to express or tell personal aspects of their lives. Also, only two of them showed personal items (a flag and a book) to add more personal information. Just as UB students, smiling was the most widely used affective strategy. However, humor was not used as a strategy to generate proximity. Precisely, humor is an effective strategy that was considered during this analysis. After viewing all the videos, none of the 22 UB students resorted to this strategy. One possible explanation for the lack of humor could be due to sociocultural factors. Students both from the UB and the HI, might have wanted to be cautious and maintain a politically correct attitude during their first encounters avoiding in this way sending messages that could generate misunderstandings. Humor varies from one culture to another and, sometimes, it is unknown how it would be received by people who do not handle the same cultural codes. Besides, the fact that the students did not know each other before could be the reason why they did not harness humor to generate propinquity.

Analysis of the questionnaires

Although in the analysis of the videos it seems evident that the UB students did not take advantage of the technical strategies of mobile phone video recording, in the questionnaires they stated the contrary. Specifically, 59% said they paid specific attention to the background and 17% did not take it into account. In addition, all the teacher trainees claimed to have taken into account lighting, framing and focus when recording their videos.

As to the use of communication strategies, all the students stated that they used gestures and an appropriate tone of voice that facilitated understanding. In addition, 12 UB students replied that they modified their speech to make it clearer. Still, in some cases, the speaking speed was fast and the tone monotonous. Despite the fact that students could use visual support, it was not very much used. However,

when it was used, it was very much appreciated. This strategy was mentioned by 12 UB students interestingly affirming that they liked that other classmates had used this strategy. Furthermore, one of the students positively appreciates how his classmates used persuasive strategies in their videos:

> *(I liked... and) the strategies followed by my two colleagues who shot the video together in order to give the reasons why they should be chosen.*

Finally, it is worth mentioning the perception that the UB students presented in relation to the use of affective strategies in their videos. When analyzing the questionnaires, they made several comments, such as the ones shown below, in which students value the use of affective strategies that generate propinquity:

> *The use of drawings and whiteboards, the fact of being very kind to your interlocutor despite not knowing them.*
>
> *Show personal elements that characterize them and that are relevant to them.*

The students who added final comments in their questionnaires highlighted the importance of the place where the recordings were made to convey closeness and show their identity, as in the following example:

> *I wanted to use my bedroom because it is what represents me the most, space-wise.*

UB and HI students' reflections

Only 5 UB students wrote a specific reflection about Flipgrid in their digital portfolios, probably because they consider it a small part of task 1 or because they have already answered a questionnaire asking about it. Even so, the app can incite mutual interest in the participants, especially when they find many things in common with the colleagues who respond to them as in the following example:

> *His video in the Flipgrid app made me think that we had a lot in common and that the subsequent conversation would not be uncomfortable, so I already felt very towards the interaction.*

Having seen and heard their partner before conducting the videoconference reduces anxiety, an objective that was pursued with the incorporation of FlipGrid before the videoconference in task 1. This question is reflected in the following comment:

> *Also, thanks to the previous video presentation, we were not going so blindly and it was more comfortable doing the task of sharing personal photos, since we had an idea about who we were going to talk to.*

It is relevant to remember that one of the main objectives of the project is also to develop digital skills among the students. In this sense, they positively valued having been able to use different tools, including Flipgrid:

> *Also, since we started the project, I have not only discovered Powtoon, but also Flipgrid and Hangouts. In this sense, this project is giving me new digital knowledge and allowing me to develop my digital skills (although I know that I still have a lot to learn).*

Likewise, it is worth mentioning two comments that reflect on what to show in the video and how to do it. One issue to keep in mind is that in both cases, the students who mentioned these strategies recorded the FlipGrid video together. It is possible that the fact that they had to negotiate on how to record themselves, and where and what to say, may have generated a greater awareness of the strategies they used. In this first comment, strategies related to information about them, the location where they record the video and technical questions are described.

> *Before recording the video, we had to take into account different factors. First of all, we had only one minute for two people, my partner Y. D. and I. So, we had to select the information accurately and that it would appear clearly so our HI colleagues would choose us. So, we introduced ourselves, giving reasons why they had to choose us. In our case it was very easy, Y. and I come from different Spanish-speaking places: she is Argentinian, and I am Spanish. So, we could provide diversity of language and customs. Secondly, we made sure that we were understood when speaking, making sure that our speech was neither too fast nor too slow. Finally, we tried to ensure that the video quality was good, in addition to supporting ourselves through visual elements such as a photograph with the flag of both countries. Despite the fact that we consider the place to have been well chosen, it is true that the photo was not well seen due to sunlight.*

In addition, in the following comment, communication strategies related to the style of the video, which was shot on the move and in the city subway, and to the informal tone they maintained in the recording are mentioned.

> *We started this project by recording a short video where, together with my classmate, we introduced ourselves and explained our favorite hobbies and activities. We both have great affection for the city of Barcelona, so we thought that we should do something related to it that was creative, original ... We decided to make a slightly more informal and dynamic video inside the Barcelona metro station. Subsequently, we uploaded our video on the Flipgrid app wishing to meet our student of Spanish soon.*

Regarding the positive emotions that can be generated through Flipgrid task, the thrill of receiving a response in the initial presentation video of the UB students is remarkable:

> *We immediately received a response from our current Icelandic partner. She answered with two videos, telling us why she had chosen us, and introducing herself. We received the video with a lot of enthusiasm, and very good vibes about the development of the e-learning project.*

The immediacy of response is a decisive factor in digital communication, and this can be seen in the interaction established from the beginning of the virtual exchange.

The reflections of HI students, like most of their classmates in UB, included few explicit mentions of the use of Flipgrid as a learning tool. They concentrated on reflecting on their experiences during their first encounters through the videos they recorded for each other.

In the following example, a Spanish student at the HI mentioned the difficulty she had in choosing who to answer and also the difficulty of understanding some of the teacher trainees.

> *I was among the first to respond to the videos from UB and therefore had difficulty choosing which three I should talk to. I liked everyone.*
>
> *They all seemed so good though I had difficulty understanding some of them. I was a little nervous when I got Miguel as a partner because he was one of those, I understood so badly. I had to listen to his video over and over to get what he said.*

However, despite this kind of difficulties, they all shared pleasant feelings about the positive effects this task had on their learning process and about how it helped them improve their communicative competence. Furthermore, all the HI students stated that the project had seemed motivating and that the Flipgrid task had made them feel great expectations regarding the first videoconferencing task. They were also surprised at how much they were able to speak in the first meeting and how that initial nervousness and anxiety disappeared once they spoke with their UB colleagues.

> *I am very happy and grateful for this course. We are just starting, and it has already helped me a lot!*
>
> *Wow, I loved talking to my classmates! They are both super friendly and fun! Before meeting them live I was a little nervous, but they were too! The truth is that it went very well for me. I spoke with J. for 2 hours and with P. 1 hour and a half, and I feel that I am much more confident when I speak.*

Conclusion

This research has analyzed the implementation of an initial activity in a telecollaboration project between teacher trainees of Spanish as a foreign language, who are Master's students at the University of Barcelona, and students of Spanish as a foreign language who attend classes in the University of Iceland. The first activity consisted of training teachers to record a short presentation video using the Flipgrid app, inviting HI participants to choose them as a virtual exchange partner. The students of Spanish, in turn, left a video responding to at least three UB participants. The objective of this first activity was to manage negative emotions that participants from previous editions had stated, specifically, anxiety, nerves, shyness and some fear of speaking for the first time with unknown people in a digital context. Furthermore, one of the main objectives of the project was to develop participants' digital skills. For this reason, it was essential to evaluate the implementation of FlipGrid around these two issues.

After analyzing the videos, the answers to the questionnaires that were answered by all the project participants, and after reviewing the reflections of the students from both universities, different questions arise. Regarding the management of emotions, it has been proven that asking students to record themselves before making a synchronous interaction in a context of virtual exchange contributes to generating interest among project partners. In addition, having the video recording of Flipgrid before the videoconferencing task helps Spanish students to reduce anxiety and fear since they feel that they know a little more about their peers from the partner university as they have been able to listen to them previously. It is also evident

that whereas the first video responses generate excitement, those students who receive a late response may experience negative emotions.

With regards to the communication and affective strategies deployed in the recording of the videos, it is clear that the teacher trainees, perhaps because they are the first to video record themselves, seek to attract more attention with their videos. They pay attention to where they are recording themselves, to the tone and speed of their speech and, in some cases, to the showing of personal elements or the supporting of their message with visual support. Many of these strategies are not as successful as they could be because teacher trainees do not take into account technical issues such as light or focus or simply because they do not fully exploit the location or the elements they use in their videos. The speech modulation, tone, rhythm and pronunciation seem to be decisive for all the participants, since the teacher trainees claim to have taken it into account and the HI students video responses seem to have been guided by who they understood more easily. Even so, some teacher trainees were unable to modulate their speech to make it completely understandable for students of Spanish as a foreign language, probably due to their lack of teaching experience.

Technical shortcomings of the videos reflect a certain lack of knowledge in digital skills, which are logical at the beginning of the project. This fact also indicates the need to prepare participants in a more profound way to take advantage of all the Flipgrid features that generate propinquity and facilitate communication. In this way, the initial task of the telecollaboration project in the next editions will benefit from the results of this study, since the tutors of both universities can help learners to use technical, communication and affective strategies to their full potential so as to promote the necessary propinquity for a successful virtual exchange project.

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