A FLIPED CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE TO ANALYZE LANGUAGE INTERACTION IN A GROUP OF STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This paper reports a research project carried out with eighth graders at the Pierre de Fermat School in Bogotá. The main objective was to analyze how this EFL learner highlighted linguistic interaction through a flipped classroom experience in a blended learning environment. The type of research design was action research and the instruments used to collect data were video recordings, students' production tasks in a virtual environment, and a journal. Considering the data gathered, this research attempted to evidence how eighth graders, by participating in activities based on task-based instruction, interacted in the language classroom and beyond it within a virtual environment. The findings suggest that language interaction was noticeable in different and meaningful ways when exposing learners to a blended-flipped scenario, unveiling signals and features that demonstrated students were able to perform a conversation by using different resources with their interlocutors. Negotiation of meaning, social communication as well as learning strategies, real-world contexts and materials, and collaborative work were the most remarkable patterns of interaction found in the context of this research project. The implementation of technology also played an important role which attempts to open a path for further research on the implementation of ICTs in language teaching and learning.

Keywords: Language interaction, blended learning, flipped classroom, EFL learners.

UNA EXPERIENCIA DE AULA INVERTIDA PARA ANALIZAR LA INTERACCIÓN LINGÜÍSTICA EN UN GRUPO DE ESTUDIANTES DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

Resumen. Este documento reporta un proyecto de investigación llevado a cabo con estudiantes de grado octavo en el colegio Pierre de Fermat en Bogotá. El objetivo principal fue analizar cómo este grupo de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extrajera resaltaban la interacción lingüística a través de una experiencia de aula invertida en un ambiente de aprendizaje semipresencial. El diseño de la investigación fue investigación acción y los instrumentos utilizados para la recolección de datos fueron grabaciones de video, producción de tareas de los estudiantes en el ambiente virtual y un diario. Teniendo en cuenta los datos recogidos, esta investigación intentó evidenciar cómo los estudiantes de octavo grado, al participar en actividades apoyadas en instrucción basada en tareas, interactuaron en el salón de clase y más allá de éste, dentro de un ambiente virtual. Los resultados sugieren que la interacción lingüística se percibió de formas diferentes y significativas cuando se expuso un escenario semipresencial, revelando señales y características que demostraron que los estudiantes eran capaces de llevar a cabo una conversación utilizando diferentes recursos con sus interlocutores. La negociación de significados, las estrategias sociales de comunicación, así como las estrategias de aprendizaje, los contextos y materiales del mundo real, y el trabajo colaborativo fueron los patrones de interacción más notables encontrados en el contexto de este

proyecto de investigación. La implementación de la tecnología también tuvo un papel importante, el cual pretende abrir un camino para futuras investigaciones sobre la implementación de las TIC's en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Interacción lingüística, aprendizaje semi-presencial, aula invertida, estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Introduction

Education in the 21st century is framed around the technological resources students and teachers have at their disposal. Advances in technology have opened possibilities for the educational field and for teaching and learning of foreign languages. Considering these insights and advances, language classrooms are called to the innovation in resources and methodology considering the rapid growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's). That is why, in recent decades, technology has been included and adapted for the educational field. It has also supported somehow the traditional resources of a language classroom such as books, dictionaries, and posts mainly for visual and interactive resources or Multimedia. Language classrooms nowadays are far from what most of us would consider traditional, and thanks to technology, learning a foreign language has been extended beyond a classroom.

However, technology is not a tool that works on its own. The inclusion of technological resources must be combined with relevant methodologies for the teaching and learning process of a foreign language. Technology in the classroom should not simply be used as another one of the resources of a list of materials, but with a pedagogical purpose. That is why, in the context of this research project, technology was articulated within a blended learning environment to offer students a flipped classroom experience to interact in the target language in and beyond the classroom.

The participants of this research proposal are eighth graders at the Pierre de Fermat School in Bogotá. In this school, foreign language lessons have been reduced to a teacher-centered approach and the lack of resources has affected the development of foreign language learning. Furthermore, the inclusion of technology as a piloting stage, in the previous academic year yielded some premises to be analyzed considering students' needs and perceptions of language learning which were stated by them in terms of trying a methodology different from the one used in their current lessons. Certainly, eighth graders' perception of foreign language learning is related to the learning of a language as part of a social practice in which they can participate and communicate.

Eighth graders claimed the inclusion of their reality in their everyday language lessons. Their reality was reflected in the use of technological resources for communicating in a foreign language, which means putting language into function in their own world. Therefore, they considered it was boring and meaningless to work on textbooks with fill-in-the-gaps activities, to translate dialogues into Spanish, or to develop activities through Edmodo disconnected from their current lessons, without feeling engaged in a meaningful conversation or expanding their points of view either in a conversational thread online or in onsite-classes. Contrary to what they used to do beyond the classroom, through websites about videogames, social media trends, and chats, they stated the need to interact in English with other teenagers around the world in order to succeed in different games online or to meet new people who also shared their preferences regarding their favourite videogames, hobbies and topics of interest. That is why, this research implemented flipped learning instruction through a blended learning environment considering the technologies eighth graders were familiar with and their interests so that

students could establish interactions in the foreign language. This implementation aimed to analyze language interaction through a flipped classroom experience.

The theoretical background embraces dimensions corresponding to: language interaction, blended learning as a model for language teaching and learning, and flipped learning instruction in English language teaching.

Interaction implies a collaborative exchange, this process entails active and productive communication between different speakers, which results in social interaction. Duensing, Stickler, Batstone, and Heins (2006, p. 35) contend that "for language learning to take place there also has to be interaction as a social activity […], it is to say, a social reciprocal action involving two or more people". Therefore, interaction is not only a collaborative exchange, but it is also a social action, natural for human beings.

It would be a contradiction then, to learn a language but not to interact with it or using it. Indeed, learners are part of a society that interacts and communicates. The ability to share a language is imbued with knowledge and culture. Then, the classroom needs to reflect as closely as possible outside sociocultural and institutional realities (Yu, 2008, p. 48) so that learners can explore with peers and through language the knowledge and culture present in their immediate contexts.

Interaction also entails some linguistic and cognitive dimensions of the EFL learning process that are implicit in the social ones (Pica, 1996; Pica, 2005). These linguistic and cognitive dimensions are outlined or framed around the context in which necessarily social interaction in communicative language teaching takes place. In the setting of the present project, the contexts that were presented to learners in the blended learning environment to promote language interaction were: the language classroom and the virtual environment at MoodleCloud.

To go further language interaction in the classroom and in regard to eighth graders' interests and needs expressed by themselves in the EFL classroom, which implies for this research project the integration of technological resources and the student's exposure to a virtual environment as part of the language lessons, the next theoretical construct describes blended learning which means students' exposure to on-site classes with virtual environment work.

Blended learning is a type of e-learning that combines instructional modalities, methods, or what we know as face-to-face instruction with online instruction or virtual environments exposure (Bonk and Graham, 2005, p. 3). Thus, blended learning combines the instruction from two historically separate models of teaching and learning: traditional learning methods, which have been around for centuries; and recent 21st learning trends, which have begun to grow and expand in exponential ways as new technologies have expanded the possibilities for communication and interaction through the central role of technology applications.

Several reasons justify why blended learning was chosen as a type of e-learning to carry out this research project. As Marsh (2012) states, teachers should include blended learning in their teaching process because it provides mainly pedagogical richness, access to knowledge, and social interaction.

Indeed, interaction in blended learning environments includes interaction in both, during the on-site class and the virtual environment. Swam (2001, cited in Brindley, Walti and Blaschke, 2009) defines virtual environments as the connection between learners with content, instructors, or peers in a virtual course. Virtual environments offer the opportunity to create a social learning scenario characterized by participation and interaction for both students and teachers. In such a way, interaction leads to collaborative work among learners. Thus,

collaborative learning in a virtual environment can take the form of discussion among the whole class or within smaller groups.

Online technologies such as asynchronous discussion forums provide the opportunity for learners to engage in social interaction by interacting with partners, content and teacher (Gallini and Barron, 2002, cited in Song and McNary, 2011, p. 1). However, previous research contends that the depth of such online interactions is not equivalent to traditional face-to-face class sessions. It is indeed the difference what makes blended learning environments a good option for teachers when mixing resources to promote interaction in and beyond the language classroom.

Precisely, blended learning stands as a tool that helps teachers and students overcome some constraints coped in face-to-face interactions in the language classroom, or as Wang (2010, p. 832) contends "as an alternative to traditional face-to-face instruction and online tasks, blended learning represents an attempt to amplify the strengths of each environment while at the same time minimizing their weaknesses."

Considering this, Lee (2002, p. 17) presents a summary of recent research that points to the benefits of online interactions when combined with face-to-face interaction. She states that the former interaction provides for more equal participation than face-to-face interactions due to time constraints in the language lessons and consequently the availability of technological resources for learners.

Attending to eighth graders' needs at the Pierre de Fermat School and their experience with Edmodo, the virtual environment they were familiar with in their language lessons, both synchronous and asynchronous activities took place while carrying out this research project in a more-elaborated platform at MoodleCloud. In the opinion of Kitade (2008, cited in Wang, 2010, p. 831), asynchronous tasks enable language learners to engage in interactions with a wider range of interlocutors because blended learning environments are not bounded by limits of time or space. This type of interaction moves participation among students because it allows all students an equal opportunity to respond to a topic. Furthermore, the asynchronous features also give learners more time to think and edit as students involved in online discussions create more thoughtful responses because they have more time to process input and reflect on what they want to express.

Hence interaction in blended learning environments is justified in the sense that integrating technology into the flow of the instruction in the classroom provides learners with ample time to foster habits of reflection and articulation of their viewpoints, which can subsequently promote further interaction in class and outside class (Wang, 2010, p. 832).

Based on the language learning needs identification and data obtained through classroom observation, it revealed that eighth graders faced a lack of language learning contextualization from their reality, content isolation, and a deficiency of connection between what they did in the language classroom and what they did in the online environment. Therefore, the last theoretical construct I propose to describe is flipped-classroom instruction.

In accordance with Egbert, Hermand and Lee (2015, p. 3), "in its most basic form, flipped instruction consists of pre-recorded direct-instruction lecture content which is made available online for students to access at home." It means that teachers do not use face-to-face time to deliver instruction; instead, direct instruction is delivered asynchronously (Stephens, n.d., p.4). Meanwhile, students watch and study the content online as homework, learn the content on their own time, and get ready before class, so that class time is spent on other activities related to the topics they studied in advance.

The flipped classroom is also known as "reverse teaching" or "the inverted classroom." In Slomanson's (2014, p. 95) words, a simplified description of a flipped classroom is that the professor's lecture is delivered at home by presenting new content online through out-of-class videos and the student's homework is done in a class where the focus is on activities enhancing the overall learning environment.

It is worth mentioning that, in the context of this research proposal, eighth graders perceived a disconnection between what they did in their face-to-face lessons and what they did online, in their virtual environment. Honeycutt and Glova (2013, p. 19) contend that:

> Flip moves away from being defined as only something that happens in class vs out of class. Instead, we focus on what students are doing to construct knowledge, connect with others, and engage in higher levels of critical thinking and analysis. This applies to both the online and face-to-face environments.

Several authors have conducted studies on the implementation of the flipped classroom model. Certainly, the origins of the flipped classroom model are attributed to the frustrations experienced by a university professor from a private college in Ohio (Baker, 2000, cited in Moran and Young, 2014, p. 164). After noticing that students did not process the information that he delivered by means of PowerPoint slides, but they copied such information verbatim he decided to ask students to read the slides before attending class. According to Moran and Young (2014, p. 164), "his idea, launched in 1995, was to use four key concepts to drive the model."

The first concept was *clarifying*. When students reviewed the material on the slides before class, the professor clarified and explained the concepts at the start of the class. The second concept was *expanding*. Once the professor was explaining the main issues, he expanded on the basic information in the slides. The third and fourth concepts were *applying* and *practice.* Students broke into small groups to apply and practice the concepts.

After his implementation, Professor Baker surveyed his students and found out that "they felt they had learned a great deal from their peers through the collaborative activities. He dubbed the new process the "Classroom Flip" and presented a paper on the idea at a conference in 2000" (Moran and Young, 2014, p. 164).

Simultaneously, another group of university instructors at Miami University in Ohio launched an "inverted classroom" in an attempt to differentiate their microeconomics lessons for different learning styles. The availability of technology was the spark that ignited the idea and allowed the researchers to invert their classroom (Lage and Plat, 2000, cited in Moran and Young, 2014, p. 164). Also, in 2000, a group of researchers revealed the success of the flipped classroom and described the key elements of this model. The authors mentioned that peer-to-peer assessment allowed students to acquire new knowledge and experience and improved their understanding of the subject studied (Brandsford, Brown and Cocking, 2001, cited in Evseeva and Solozhenko, 2015, p. 209).

In 2007, Bergmann and Sams (2012, p. 51), two high school chemistry teachers, began a collaborative effort to teach their content with the aid of screen capture software that allowed them to record lectures and spend class time working one-on-one with students. From their experience, they started to use the concept of *Flipped Mastery* in which "asynchronous learning takes place as students work simultaneously but at different paces on multiple projects."

In a flipped classroom study conducted by Enfield in 2013 (cited in Basal, 2015, p. 30), the author found that this model was effective in helping students learn the content and increased self-efficacy in their ability to learn independently. On the other hand, Muldrow (2013, cited in Evseeva and Solozhenko, 2015, p. 209) wrote an article called "A New Approach to Language Instruction – Flipping the Classroom" sharing her experience of using

flipped classroom technology. The author states that moving from the traditional to the flipped classroom involves great adaptations by the teacher and students.

Although there are numerous studies devoted to the flipped classroom, I could evidence that almost all the published research to date has been conducted in areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Furthermore, most of those studies were conducted at higher education institutions. Regarding foreign language learning and teaching, I found a study conducted by Basal (2015) whose aim was to gain insights into the perceptions of prospective English language teachers at a state university in Turkey on flipped classrooms and to introduce the implementation of a flipped classroom into an English language class. However, there is a lack of studies conducted to address the issue of foreign language interaction in flipped classrooms.

Then, considering the state of the art and the needs expressed by eighth graders in their foreign language lessons, I find the development of the current study valid and purposeful in the school setting of the participants.

Method

Twenty 8th graders in the age range of 13 to 15, were part of this Project. Considering the type of questions and the objectives proposed, the research type selected to carry out this research project is action research. Chamot, Barnhardt and Dirstine (1998, p. 1) define action research as "classroom-based research conducted by teachers to reflect upon and evolve their teaching." The purpose of teacher-research in this methodology is to gain an understanding of teaching and learning within one's classroom and to use that knowledge to increase teaching efficacy and/or student learning.

Action research moves through four stages observing, planning, acting and reflecting (Dawson, 2002, p. 17). I followed the same four stage plan to develop the research procedure below.

In the first stage (observation) I identified the needs of the population, as well as their interests in articulating technological resources in their English lessons. For his stage I designed and implemented a classroom observation format adapted from the scheme proposed by Spada and Fröhlichs' (1995, cited in Zoltán, 2007, p. 182) to observe and have a general idea of what actually happened in the language classes, the content students followed, the materials, and the management of the classroom.

The second stage in the action research cycle is planning. For this stage and having in mind the data collected in the previous stage, I designed an open-ended questionnaire and when I applied it, I could determine that eighth graders find technology useful to communicate and interact with teachers and classmates, to work in pairs and to solve doubts regarding the tasks of the subject. They also stated Edmodo (the website they work on within their language lessons) was useful to share with their teacher and classmates beyond the classroom. Besides, they considered the use of Edmodo as an easier and more fun way to do tasks compared with the ones they develop in their notebooks and textbooks. They valued the readiness and practicality of the application to share content and to explain different subject matters. Most of them want to continue using technologies like Edmodo in their language lessons.

Although eighth graders agreed with the richness and innovation of their language lessons through Edmodo, most of them stated it was difficult to contact their partners to work in groups. Indeed, Edmodo has not the possibility to send private messages to classmates.

Students can contact the teacher privately, but they are not able to send private messages to their classmates. Besides, Edmodo is an educational social network, then, resources such as forums or web-conferencing are not available on that platform. Even though teachers can implement forums or web-conferencing through external links, students expect to find a complete and integrative platform.

The next stage in action research is acting. In this stage, students were exposed to a blended learning environment designed and supported through MoodleCloud by following the insights of flipped instruction. The instruments that were used in this stage were video recordings to gather data about students' interaction in the language classroom, as well as students' intervention registered on the virtual platform at MoodleCloud. Finally, the last stage in the action research cycle is reflecting. For this stage and during the whole process I used a diary.

The research tools described above were analyzed under the Content Analysis approach. As the present project follows an action research cycle, each stage of the action research requires collecting data at a specific moment. Once the data has been collected, the analysis is carried out. Content analysis allows the researcher to analyze qualitative data by systematically working through each transcript or note was taken. Once the researcher finds specific characteristics within the text, she or he can assign codes, which may be numbers or words recurrent in the data collected. Those codes allow the researcher to establish categories that may emerge from the data or may emerge from a list of pre-established categories (Dawson, 2002, p. 118).

Using codes to establish categories was the first step to analyzing and interpreting data. Seedhouse (2005, p. 165) states that "conversation analysis is a methodology for the analysis of naturally-occurring spoken interaction." Then, having in mind that the main interest of this research project focuses on language interaction, the analysis of data gathered to establish the emerging categories underpins the insights of the conversation analysis approach as well, considering the scope of the research on its questions, objectives and theoretical framework.

What conversation analysis offers in the words of Forrester and Reason (2006, p. 44), is the ability to highlight the most common processes involved in talk-in-interaction so that the main interest is not collecting a large number of examples of conversation to make general claims about what is going on, but to focus on the micro-detail of specific conversations. Therefore, when the researcher identifies those micro-details, they can be used to understand the immediate context of interaction and the sense people make out of their everyday lives.

Results

Considering the criteria to analyze data, the emerging categories to respond to the research questions stated in this research proposal are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Findings and categorization

Main Research Question How does an EFL group of eighth graders at Pierre de Fermat School highlight language interaction through a flipped classroom experience in a blended learning environment?

Sub Questions	Final Categories	Sub-categories
How does language interaction take place when learners are exposed to a flipped classroom setting in a blended learning environment in an EFL group of eighth graders?	a. Learners interact socially and negotiate meaning.	• Learners and teacher asking for clarification. • Learners and teacher confirming their understanding. • Learners and teacher formulating questions and statements to check their interlocutor understanding.
	b. Learners' use social communication strategies in language interaction.	• Learners using paraphrase in order to communicate a desired word or concept. • Learners and teacher's interaction mediated by the use of their native language and non-verbal communication.
	c. Learning strategies used by learners in the process of language interaction.	• Self-correction and peer-correction as monitoring techniques to interact in the target language. • Learners using repetition as a cognitive technique for organizing ideas.
How does an EFL group of eighth graders move their interaction through tasks designed in a flipped classroom experiment through a blended learning environment?	d. Learners interact in the target language thinking of a real-world context.	• Learners' language interaction through role plays and simulations. • Learners' interaction mediated by the use of visual aids and realia.
	e. Learners' interaction as collaborative work.	• Learners appealing for assistance. • Learners and teacher offering help when interacting in the Foreign Language.

f. Learners' interaction increases with contents of their interest.	• Learners communicate and link content with their own experiences.

Note. Adapted from Dawson (2002).

Learners interact socially and negotiate meaning.

The category *social interaction and negotiation of meaning* was the first that emerged to answer the first research sub-question which had to do with how language interaction takes place when learners are exposed to a flipped classroom setting in a blended learning environment in an EFL group of eighth graders at the Pierre de Fermat School.

In the first place, social interaction is conceived by Chen, Caropeso, and Hsu (2008, p. 4) as "a dynamic, changing sequence of social actions between individual groups who modify their actions and reactions due to the actions by their interaction partners." When interacting in a foreign language, those actions and reactions are activated in the process of understanding and being understood by an interlocutor. Several actions and reactions may emerge because of keeping social contact or a connection between people and groups who participate in a dynamic exchange.

Then, considering social interaction as the activation of actions and reactions between people and groups who communicate with each other, the first action observed in eighth graders when interacting in the target language was the negotiation of meaning.

Negotiation of meaning is a feature underpinning language interaction and is described by Yufrizal (2001, p. 63) as "a series of activities conducted by addressor and addressee to make themselves understand and be understood by their interlocutors." Therefore, negotiation of meaning is an activity through which L2 learners and interlocutors work together in order to reach a mutual comprehension of the message. Certainly, one of the most characteristic features of the negotiation of meaning is that it alters the structure of interaction between two or more interlocutors as they engage in discourse (Pica, 1994, p. 518).

Negotiation of meaning was evident in the process of language interaction when exposing eighth graders to a blended-flipped classroom. The following excerpts taken from the video recordings in the language classroom illustrate how each one of the utterances in eighth graders' interaction can serve as features of negotiation of meaning (Pica, Doughty, and Young, 1986, p. 125).

The first sub-category that emerged from the first category was *learners and teacher asking for clarification*. Clarification request is one of the features highlighted by Pica et al. (1986, p. 125) in the process of meaning negotiation. The author contends that clarification requests are moves by which one speaker seeks assistance in understanding the other speaker's preceding utterance. When asking for clarification, the addressee can use the statements "I don't understand, please repeat, what?" as well as the use of rising intonation. Excerpt 1 taken from the video recordings in the language classroom while students were participating in a task evidenced how a student asked for clarification from the teacher in the explanation of the information gap task; and how a student asked her partner for clarification at the same time:

Excerpt 1: A student looking for clarification to develop the task

S1: What is 'devices connect through it'?

S2: Devices… you talk of the devices?

T: You have to look this part of your sheet.

S1: What?

T: This part of your sheet (pointing out to the piece of paper). Why are you asking about the devices? You have to ask her about the story of the invention.

S1: I don't understand. T: No tienes que leer lo que ya tienes. Tú necesitas una información que ella tiene.

S1: Ah!... What is the history of the bulb?

The second sub-category that emerged was *learners and teacher confirming their understanding*. The second feature of negotiation of meaning has to do with confirmation checks. They are moves by which one speaker seeks confirmation of the other's preceding message (Pica et al., 1986, p. 125). There are several ways of confirming understanding in the process of negotiation of meaning: through repetition, rising intonation, nodding, or saying "yes". The next excerpt, taken from the language classroom includes evidence on how eighth graders seek to confirm their understanding when interacting with the teacher and classmates in a blended-flipped classroom by repeating all or part of the message:

Excerpt 2: A student repeating part of the message

S1: How? ¿La tercera sería tiempo en el que se utilizó el invento?

T: (Teacher shakes her head)

S1: No?

T: It's related to the time people spend using that device…time

S1: Tiempo

T: Yes… people spend using that device… how much time… the question is how much time people or how long people spend using that device.

S2: People typically spend 4 or 8 hours using it per day.

The last sub-category was *learners and teacher formulating questions and statements to check their interlocutor understanding*. The third feature of meaning negotiation is comprehension checks. Comprehension or understanding checks are moves through which one speaker attempts to determine whether the other speaker has got and understood a preceding message (Pica et al., 1986, p. 126). There are no specific ways for doing comprehension checks since it depends on the context and content in which the negotiation of meaning takes place. In the current study, comprehension checks are evident by the means of statements such as "Did you understand?", "Do you know…?", and What is the meaning of?"

Learners use social communication strategies in language interaction.

Communicative strategies have been defined by several authors from different perspectives. For example, Brown (1994, cited in Wei, 2011, p. 12) looks at communication strategies from the perspective of error resources while Færch and Kasper (1983, cited in Wei, 2011, p. 12) perceive communication strategies from a psychological approach. On the other hand, Tarone (1980, cited in Wei, 2011, p. 12) studies communicative strategies from the interactional perspective. Then, considering the focus on interaction in this research project, it is the last perspective that will guide and support the emerging findings on explaining how language interaction took place when eighth graders were exposed to a flipped classroom model in a blended learning environment.

Learners using paraphrase in order to communicate a desired word or concept is the first sub-category. The paraphrase strategy means that the learner replaces an L2 item by

describing or exemplifying it. Tarone (1980, cited in Wei, 2011, p. 18) contends that paraphrasing includes three subcategories: approximation, word coinage, and circumlocution. When exposing eighth graders to a blended-flipped classroom, two subcategories of paraphrasing emerged in the process of language interaction. The first one was approximation and the second one was word coinage. The following excerpts taken from the language classroom illustrate these subcategories:

Excerpt 3:   A student uses the word "pollution" instead of "pollute" (approximation)

S1: Now, my friend Luis Vital.

S2: Good morning, Esteban. The majority people pollution the air… in the Antartida is people to make bonfire, smoke and recycle.

T: they don't recycle.

S2: (he nods)

Excerpt 4: A student creates the word "deports" due to its similarity with the Spanish word "deportes" (word coinage)

T: yeah, but in your words, what could be the treatment?

S1: The treatment of?

T: of obesity

S1: Mmm

T: Imagine I am fat

S1: oh, yeah

T: and you are the doctor

S1: eat much vegetables and do deport.

Learners' and teacher's interaction is mediated using their native language.

and non-verbal communication corresponds to the second sub-category. Following the interactional perspective provided by Tarone (1980, cited in Wei, 2011, p. 18), she includes the use of the students' L1 and the non-verbal communication within a broader category called "transfer." Transfer is one of the three main types of communicative strategies (Tarone, 1980, cited in Wei, 2011, p. 19). It can be evidenced through four elements: literal translation, language switch, appeal for assistance, and mime.

When exposing eighth graders to a blended-flipped classroom two elements were predominant: the use of their native language and non-verbal communication. In the context of this research and considering eighth graders' level of proficiency in the target language, they resorted to their native language because they had not developed the necessary skills yet to keep a conversation entirely in English.

On the other hand, evidence on non-verbal language were not exclusive of the language classroom. The virtual environment at MoodleCloud presented students with a variety of icons that could serve as non-verbal language. Besides, in their written tasks I could evidence learners replace sounds and non-verbal actions with written words so that they could enrich their dialogues.

Learning strategies used by learners in the process of language interaction

Language learning strategies are used by learners to complete a given activity in a language lesson. As for Kinoshita (2003, p. 1), "recognizing that there is a task to complete or

a problem to solve […] language learners will use whatever metacognitive, cognitive or social/affective strategies they possess to attend to the language-learning activity." In the context of this research proposal, two learning strategies were remarkable when exposing learners to a blended-flipped classroom. The first one was the metacognitive strategy monitoring and the second one was the cognitive strategy repetition.

Self-correction and peer-correction as monitoring techniques applied by learners to interact in the target language emerged as the first sub-category. While learners interacted in the target language, video recordings evidence how they corrected themselves when errors emerged, and in turn, those errors were sometimes highlighted and corrected by their peers. That is to say, self-correction and peer-correction took place in the process of language interaction while they monitored the development of the different language tasks in which they participated.

Learners using repetition as a cognitive technique for organizing ideas correspond to the second sub-category. Learners do not only use repetition as a signal to negotiate meaning when asking for clarification or confirming understanding. Repetition was also used by eighth graders in the blended-flipped classroom as a technique for organizing their ideas.

Learners interact in the target language thinking of a real-world context

This category was the first that emerged to answer the second research sub-question which had to do with how eighth graders move their interaction through tasks designed in a flipped classroom experiment through a blended learning environment. When exposing eighth graders to the blended-flipped classroom, they had the opportunity to gather information during the pre-task stage in the virtual environment at MoodleCloud. During this information-gathering process, they chose the resources they had an interest in and read to develop their knowledge. Yet, during the while and post-tasks stages, learners presented their tasks using the materials, resources, and methodologies of their preference. In the development of those tasks, students framed the topics within real-world contexts by means of role-plays and simulations within an environment enriched with visual aids and realia.

Learners' interaction as collaborative work

This category corresponds to the second one to answer research sub-question number two. During the development of the tasks, students evidenced a central role in interaction that not only involved asking and offering help but implied a collaborative attitude. Eighth graders recognized in their role that the teacher was not the center of the process, but that they can find support in their classmates and be active participants of their own language learning.

Learner's interaction increases with the contents of their interest

One of the purposes of including a flipped learning environment was to make students' interaction expand from the physical language classroom to the virtual environment. More exactly, the virtual environment at MoodleCloud sought students' involvement regarding the several proposed topics and the resources to interact with content such as reading texts and videos as well as to extend students' participation by making a linkage between the topic and their own experiences, by making the contents of the language classroom flexible and extensible. Such flexibility allowed me to choose the topics from the syllabus which were relevant to the learners in order to promote language interaction.

In the students' new and central role, their participation increased significantly, and the content of the tasks created a medium for communicating and linking content with their own experiences. When students felt identified with the contents their participation increased and it contributed to building a language community where they could share their opinions, perceptions, and own experiences.

Discussion and conclusions

Taking into account the main research question stated in this Project which dealt with how an EFL group of eighth graders at the Pierre de Fermat School highlight language interaction through a flipped classroom experience in a blended learning environment, I found learners' interaction emerged thanks to the tasks and resources proposed which resulted as a vehicle to determine how language interaction took place and how it moved in a blended-flipped scenario.

The reasons that justify the use of the flipped model in the context of this research to analyze how language interaction was highlighted by eighth graders are tackled by Honeycutt and Glova (2013, p. 20). They analyze and evaluate the benefits of both settings: the language classroom and the virtual environment. In accordance with the authors, the challenges and benefits of teaching and learning with technology are undeniable. However, "there is something special about the learning experiences teachers share with their students in the face-to-face classroom. The face-to-face learning experience just cannot be replicated, yet many of us keep trying to recreate it with technology." Then, the idea of flipping a classroom is far from replicating language classroom experiences in a virtual scenario. Instead, "we should try to find the technological tools that allow us to adapt the strategies we use in our face-to-face classes to engage with and connect our students in the online environment, just in a different way" (Honeycutt and Glova, 2013, p. 21).

To embrace flipped classrooms, according to Bart (2013, p. 18), "include the ability to provide a better learning experience for students, greater availability of technologies that support the model and positive results from initial trials." This author reports some of the greatest faculty advantages of flipped classrooms which were evidenced in this project. Some of them are more classroom activity, classroom discussion, collaboration, the ability to adjust instruction styles on a per-student basis, and better students' performance.

As the focus of this research project was on language interaction, according to the findings it occurred when exposing eighth graders to a blended-flipped scenario in different and meaningful ways. They interacted to negotiate meaning and such interaction unveiled many signals and features, that despite the learners' proficiency level in the target language, demonstrated they were able to sustain a conversation by using different resources with their interlocutors.

Although at the beginning I was really concerned with the use of the L1 when learners interacted, when analyzing data, it turned out that L1, or students' mother tongue was a resource that did not prevail with the interaction in the target language. Conversely, the use of the learners' native language was support for students when they did not have the ability to use English to communicate.

Another important aspect found in learners' interaction was the use of non-verbal communication for interacting. The non-verbal language was as significant as written and spoken pieces of language. They demonstrated how learners felt and how they reacted toward the content studied in both the language classroom and the virtual environment at MoodleCloud.

One of the advantages of working in a blended-flipped scenario in the current study was that time constraints were reduced, and classroom management time was better distributed. In the observation stage as students worked with textbooks, reviewing in-class activities or homework was sometimes time-consuming and purposeless. In contrast, while eighth graders were participating in the different tasks proposed under the flipped model, they had the chance to use the language to communicate in the context of the task. Such a communicative process led them to use communicative and learning strategies to get feedback from their peers and

from the teacher. In the same way, they realized they could correct themselves when errors appeared.

Time deployed ineffectively was only one of the shortcomings evidenced during the classroom observation stage in this action research project. Another remarkable fact had to do with the topics of the tasks that were delimited by the contents in the book which were far from students' reality and at the same time, those contents were scarcely shared by the students' activities in a virtual scenario.

With the implementation of a blended-flipped setting, students moved their interaction in the target language by thinking of a real-world context. When presenting their tasks, they used role plays, simulation, visual aids, and realia to represent and expose the topics they dealt with within a delimited context of real life. Language interaction, in this research project, did not occur because of the integration of productive and receptive skills but, because from the beginning of the proposal, it focused on tasks. The products students studied and produced were useful to provide a setting that served several purposes in the context of this research project: to engage learners in the process of language interaction in and beyond the language classroom, to establish a linkage among relevant content and resources with their immediate context so that they can establish a sustainable communicative process.

When students interact with the contents of their interest, they assume an active role in language interaction. I found in this study that the flipped classroom model allowed learners to shift their roles. This finding is supported by Bart (2013, p. 18) who contends that "the flipped classroom model is critical in shifting our educational approach from a passive one to an active one that better prepares students by engaging them in the [content and] material."

Language interaction should be treated and enriched in the language classroom having in mind that language teaching and learning involves communicating, participating, and discussing. Learners in the setting of this research proposal faced language lessons delivered with repetitive drills and traditional materials. That is why such a perspective of language learning and teaching allowed me to take the risk to propose a change from the traditional English language lessons into lessons oriented to be more communicative and meaningful for learners.

On the other hand, language interaction unveils communicative processes that make each classroom interaction among learners-learners, learners-teacher, and learners-content unique and valuable for the features one can find in naturally occurring talk-in interactions. Having in mind that interaction is a huge matter to be analyzed and studied in detail, the data gathered in this research project corresponds to the way learners did and said in the task-based instruction tasks in the blended-flipped environment.

More features and patterns might be included in the context of this research proposal. However, five task-based lessons delivered in the blended-flipped environment were not enough for achieving such a complete analysis. Some factors such as time delimited for data collection as well as students' proficiency in the target language contribute to delimiting the research proposal findings in order to focus only on two important factors, which are my main inquiries: how eighth graders' interaction took place when exposing them to a flipped classroom setting in a blended learning environment and how they moved their interactions through tasks designed in a flipped classroom experiment.

That is why the finding of this research project attempt to open a pathway for further research on language interaction. For example, one aspect that comes out for other teacher researchers is a feature of language learning known as "interlanguage." The context of this research proposal, as well as its findings, can portray a vehicle for making research focusing on

student interlanguage to identify and analyze within the conversational analysis approach how learners manipulate interlanguage in creative, complex, and more target-like ways in language interaction when including a blended-flipped scenario.

Although the flipped classroom model is not new by itself, it is worth remembering that as a model of instruction of blended learning, it involves the use of technology tools that are constantly evolving. Therefore, as the flipped classroom becomes more popular in language learning, new tools may emerge to support the out-of-class portion of the curriculum. In particular, the ongoing development of powerful mobile devices may put a wider range of rich, educational resources into the hands of students, at times and places that may be most convenient for them. It would be interesting to analyze interaction with the inclusion of those mobile apps resources.

Further research is also suggested based on the possibility of conducting a research proposal based on the frame constructed for carrying out this project in order to analyze interaction just focused on virtual environments or from any other resources from the web or from online learning. It may also be viable to conduct a research proposal in a blended-flipped scenario with a pedagogical implementation focused on content-based or project-based instruction.

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