

## Video dubbing as a strategy for reducing foreign language speaking anxiety levels

El doblaje de vídeos como estrategia para reducir los niveles de ansiedad al hablar en lenguas extranjeras

Dublagem de vídeos como estratégia para reduzir os níveis de ansiedade ao falar em língua estrangeira

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**Abstract:** The present action research attempts to describe the influence of the video dubbing process to reduce primary school students' speaking anxiety levels in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The intervention consisted of 5 sessions where students worked in pairs practicing reading aloud the dialogue of a movie scene, using the video as an input for intralingual dubbing, to finally record and synchronize their voices with the scene. The participants of this study were 8 Chilean students from 8th grade who were selected based on their high levels of speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom. To analyze the effect of this strategy, a Likert scale, semi structured interviews, and observations were conducted. Findings revealed that the dubbing process contributed to decrease the participants' speaking anxiety levels, declaring to feel more confident, less nervous, and more willing to participate in the EFL classroom, concluding that this strategy has proven to be effective for this purpose.

**Keywords:** Oral expression, second language instruction, language instruction, learning method, audiovisual instruction, primary education.

**Resumen:** La presente investigación intenta describir la influencia del proceso de doblaje de videos para reducir los niveles de ansiedad al hablar de los estudiantes de primaria en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). La intervención constó de 5 sesiones donde los estudiantes trabajaron en parejas practicando la lectura en voz alta del diálogo de una escena cinematográfica, utilizando el video como insumo para el doblaje intralingüístico, para finalmente grabar y sincronizar sus voces con la escena. Los participantes de este estudio fueron 8 estudiantes chilenos de 8º grado que fueron seleccionados por sus altos niveles de ansiedad al hablar en el aula de EFL. Para analizar el efecto de esta estrategia se realizó una escala Likert, entrevistas semiestructuradas y observaciones. Los hallazgos revelaron que el proceso de doblaje contribuyó a disminuir los niveles de ansiedad al hablar de los participantes, declarando sentirse más seguros, menos nerviosos y más dispuestos a participar en el aula de EFL, concluyendo que esta estrategia ha demostrado ser efectiva para este propósito.

*Palabras clave:* Expresión oral, enseñanza de segundas lenguas, enseñanza de lenguas, método de aprendizaje, enseñanza audiovisual, educación primaria.

**Resumo:** A presente pesquisa-ação busca descrever a influência do processo de dublagem de vídeos para reduzir os níveis de ansiedade ao falar entre alunos do ensino fundamental na sala de aula de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira (EFL). A intervenção consistiu em 5 sessões nas quais os alunos trabalharam em pares, praticando a leitura em voz alta do diálogo de uma cena de filme, usando o vídeo como insumo para a dublagem intralingual e, por fim, gravando e sincronizando suas vozes com a cena. Os participantes deste estudo foram 8 estudantes chilenos do 8º ano, selecionados com base em seus altos níveis de ansiedade ao falar na sala de aula de EFL. Para analisar o efeito dessa estratégia, foram aplicadas uma escala Likert, entrevistas semiestruturadas, e observações. Os resultados revelaram que o processo de dublagem contribuiu para diminuir os níveis de ansiedade ao falar dos participantes, que declararam sentir-se mais confiantes, menos nervosos e mais dispostos a participar na sala de aula de EFL, concluindo que essa estratégia se mostrou eficaz para esse propósito.

*Palavras-chave:* Expressão oral, ensino de segunda língua, instrução de idiomas, método de aprendizagem, ensino audiovisual, educação primária.

## INTRODUCTION

In this globalized world, English learning is a matter of interest as it is considered a universal language, being vital for the development of personal and professional goals (Nishanthi, 2018). Regarding the Chilean context, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) within the school system, with a focus on the development of the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and the adoption of a communicative language teaching approach (Barahona, 2016) along with the alignment with international standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Considering these criteria, the curriculum for the English subject is oriented towards the development of two levels: 8th-grade students are expected to reach an A2 level and 12th-grade students are required to reach a B1 level according to the CEFR (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Regarding the level required for 8th graders, it is expected for them to be able to present information orally, participate in interactions, react to oral texts and to demonstrate knowledge and use of the language in conversations, discussions, and presentations (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

However, the Chilean EFL classroom reality presents several drawbacks to achieve the mentioned levels, such as the number of students inside the classroom and the number of English lessons per week (Figueroa & Márquez, 2013), requiring teachers to apply different strategies to achieve the national curriculum objectives. For instance, the lack of students' exposure to English outside the classroom and the lack of opportunities for interactions using the language are aspects to consider when analyzing non-private school contexts.

The problem this action research intended to address is that a group of eighth graders from a subsidized school in Coronel exhibited high levels of anxiety when participating in speaking activities, weakening their motivation to actively engage in the lessons when interactions occurred. The students manifested that they felt shy, and they did not like to be observed when speaking English, as well as preferring to use Spanish in the classroom. Despite the implementation of different activities aimed at developing speaking skills, these strategies have not been effective in building students' confidence for such tasks, limiting their progress in regard to oral communication. In accordance with this situation, Atas (2015) suggests that:

Teenagers are afraid of making mistakes in front of their friends and their teachers. They feel embarrassed, anxious, and humiliated. These feelings may cause reticence. When they are anxious, they can't speak. When they can't speak, they become more anxious. (p. 962)

This problem was important to approach as these students were not developing their speaking skills properly, considering that according to their school level (8th grade), they should be able to demonstrate knowledge and use of the language orally (Ministerio de Educación, 2016, p. 74).

In modern world, anxiety is a common phenomenon defined as:

An abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physical signs (such as tension, sweating, and increased pulse rate), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it. (Merriam-Webster, n.d).

Regarding foreign language acquisition, Krashen (1981) in his acclaimed Affective Filter Hypothesis considers anxiety as one of the affective factors that may interfere with the effective acquisition of a second language and that may have negative effects on oral communication performance. Even though research concerning the impact of foreign language anxiety as a factor related to the results of learning a new language is still a developing area, many authors have hypothesized regarding its importance.

For instance, Horwitz et al. (1986) define foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p.128). According to Suleimenova (2013), the high levels of foreign language anxiety that some learners have may be intensified due to the interest in the development of the speaking proficiency, stating that "foreign language learners often express feelings of stress, nervousness or anxiety while learning to speak the target language and claim to have 'mental block' against learning" (p.1860). By the same token, the author says that when anxiety is present, the retrieval of information is disrupted, and it manifests as unwillingness to participate in speaking interactions, demotivation, and lack of confidence. It is indicated by Mulyani (2018) that "This problem exists among the EFL learners from the beginning to the advanced levels" (p.3), being the speaking skill the one that provokes more situations of anxiety that learners might face. In order to overcome this problem, it is suggested to carry out activities that provide practice in a relaxed environment.

In the field of foreign language learning, the revoicing mode of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) is increasingly gaining scholars' attention, being dubbing its most studied technique. Dubbing is defined as a process that involves replacing the original soundtrack containing the actors' dialogue with a recording that reproduces the original message, ensuring that the sounds and the actors' lip movements are synchronized. Regarding foreign language learning, dubbing can be done in two different directions: L1 to L2, or L2 to L2, being the former combination more studied than intralingual dubbing (Talaván & Costal, 2017).

Dubbing projects promote both collaborative and independent learning, as well as enhance learners' confidence as they may be carried out through different steps involving language skills in all the areas (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and developed as gradually as needed. This aligns with the experiential learning approach, which encourages teachers to involve students in practical, hands-on activities and reflective thinking in order to enhance their knowledge, skills, and ethical development (Pushpalatha, 2022), emphasizing the use of the learning by doing methodology. By applying language in meaningful contexts, students learn in a more immersive and interactive way. For instance, it is encouraged by Burston (2005) to divide the task into different stages: "video selection, scene cropping and muting, initial class presentation of the target video, group listening comprehension (or scenario creation) activities, individual practice, group rehearsal and, finally, soundtrack dubbing" (p.79). According to this author, one of the advantages of this type of task is that dubbing "...can be done and redone as often as needed to get the best possible results. Students can self-monitor and improve their oral performance in a way that is just not possible in real-time" (Burston, 2005. p.80).

In accordance with Beltramello (2016) "Dubbing can provide students with a number of tasks involving the oral dimension of a video clip, so that they are allowed the opportunity to improve their speaking skills by working with authentic video material" (p.1). By the same token, Talaván and Costal (2017) propose that the enhancement of oral production occurs in terms "pronunciation, naturalness of speech, speed and fluency" (p. 63), suggesting that the dubbing process can potentially bring about different interesting benefits when it comes to L2 learning.

In relation to foreign language anxiety, Sánchez-Requena (2020) states that this type of didactic approach may decrease anxiety levels, specifically in the case of shy students, as being behind a screen is different from live performances in front of the class or teachers. In the same line, Burston (2005) highlights that "students find working with video much less intimidating than performing live and can thus engage in the project with a much lower affective filter" (p.81).

Despite the potential benefits of short video dubbing, its effectiveness in reducing speaking anxiety among Chilean eighth graders remains underexplored. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research question: To what extent does the short video dubbing process contribute to reducing the speaking anxiety levels of Chilean eighth graders in the EFL classroom?

The specific objectives this research attempts to address are:

To assess the impact of short video dubbing on reducing students' speaking anxiety levels in the EFL classroom.

To examine students' perceptions of the effectiveness of short video dubbing in alleviating speaking anxiety.

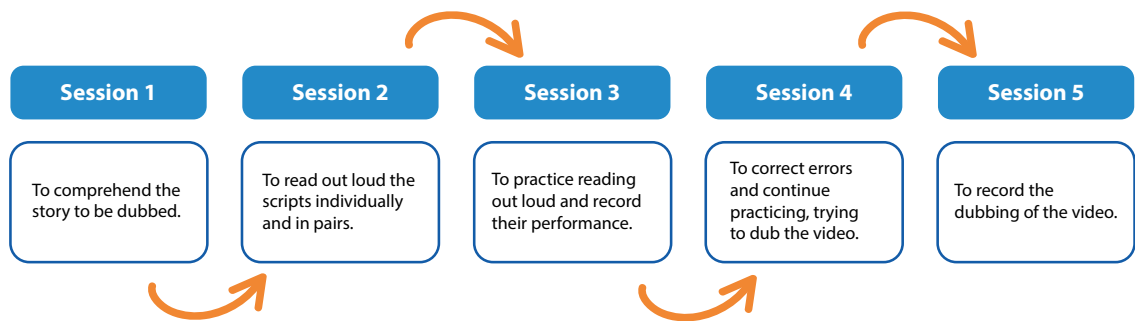
## MATERIALS Y METHODS

The current study employed a qualitative descriptive oriented action research, involving data collection from qualitative and quantitative methods. Regarding this type of research, it is stated by Burns (2015) that its main objective is to identify issues or situations considered by the participants as problematic and worthy of research to generate critically informed changes in practice, following a self-reflective and critical perspective throughout the process.

This action research was carried out in a private-subsidized school from Coronel, Chile, with a non-probability purposive sample. The sample was composed of 8 students from 8th grade, all of them aged between 12 and 13 years old, with an A1 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Languages. The participants of this study were selected based on their high levels of anxiety displayed in the EFL classroom after applying an adapted version of the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986).

The action plan consisted of 5 sessions. In the first session, participants were introduced to the dubbing process. Then, they started working in pairs with the movies or series scenes they previously chose, and they answered comprehension questions about the story they were about to dub. In the next session, the scenes' scripts were handed in. Participants watched the videos and started reading aloud the dialogues, practicing first individually and then with their partners. In the third session, they continued practicing and next, they recorded their performance using their mobile phones to listen to it and find errors in the following session. Fourth session began by listening to their previous recording. Participants identified errors and kept on practicing, this time focusing on trying to correct their errors and dub the video. Finally, in the fifth session, participants recorded their voices dubbing the videos. In this part of the process, professional guidance and help were provided by an audio-visual communicator. Figure 1 illustrates the stages of the action plan.

**Figure 1**  
*Stages of the action plan*



*Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).*

Since the existing instruments used for measuring foreign language speaking anxiety levels are not completely consistent with the characteristics of the participants and context of this study, an adapted version of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986) was administered to the students before and after the intervention to measure participants' levels of speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom. The adapted version of this scale consisted of seven items reflective of communication apprehension, particularly, in relation to the use of the speaking skill in the English class. The adaptation of items included translating the statements into Spanish and word changes with the aim of reflecting speaking anxiety in an eighth graders' English class. This adaptation was validated by 4 EFL professors.

After the intervention, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants of the study. This interview was composed of eight questions concerning students' perceptions towards the use of the short video dubbing process for reducing speaking anxiety levels in the EFL classroom, allowing the participants to elaborate on their answers so as to collect in-depth information about the students' experience.

Regarding data analysis, the adapted version of Foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) was applied two times, thus, results were analyzed for two main purposes: before the intervention to select participants whose speaking anxiety levels in the EFL classroom are high, and then, after the intervention to compare results and evaluate the contribution of the strategy chosen. Additionally, both times the analysis comprised coding and interpretation of the information collected, in concordance with descriptive statistics, involving measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and correlation analysis.

Alternatively, the data collected from the semi-structured interviews underwent content analysis, which involved the creation of a cross-sectional indexing. The main idea of this technique is that "the researcher applies a uniform set of indexing categories systematically and consistently to their data" (Mason, 2002, p. 151). The categories and subcategories identified in the interviews' transcriptions are meant to focus and organize the retrieval of information found in the texts, for the purpose of further analysis involving comparison, interpretation, and reporting of the data. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, however the excerpts included in the results section were translated into English.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this research will be organized considering the two specific objectives this research attempted to address.

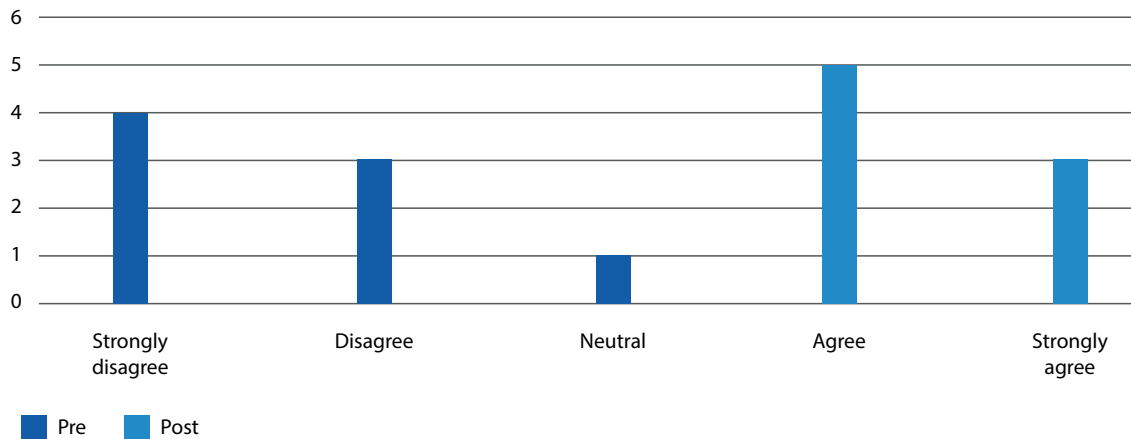
### Specific objective 1: To assess the impact of short video dubbing on reducing students' speaking anxiety levels in the EFL classroom.

After comparing the scale's results pre and post intervention, it is possible to see that after using the short video dubbing process as a strategy, participants decreased their levels of speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom in all the areas under investigation.

Concerning the scale's first statement "I feel confident speaking English in front of my classmates." (see Figure 2), pre-stage results show that 7 out of 8 participants strongly disagree or disagree (87.5%) indicating that most of the participants did not feel confident when speaking English in front of their classmates. After the intervention, 100% of the participants manifest to strongly agree or agree with the statement, showing that participants' confidence is perceived positively compared to the pre-stage.

**Figure 2**

Results Item 1: "I feel confident speaking English in front of my classmates."

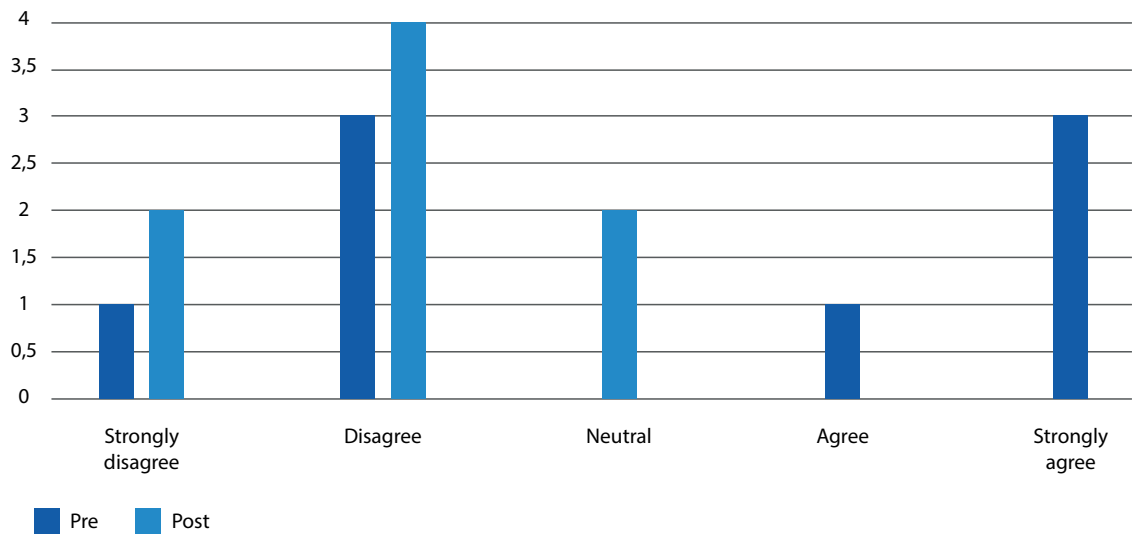


Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).

In the pre-stage, results from Item 2: "I feel nervous when I have to speak in English" present 50% of answers that strongly agree or agree with this statement, as shown in Figure 3. After the intervention, 6 participants (75%) answered to strongly disagree or disagree. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that participants feel less nervous when they have to speak in English.

**Figure 3**

Results Item 2: "I feel nervous when I have to speak in English."

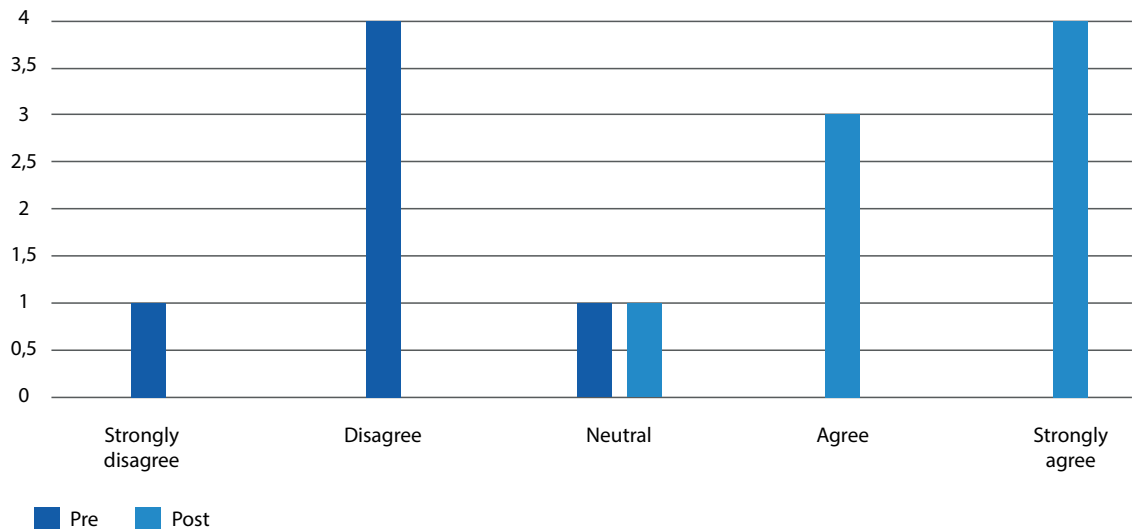


Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).

Figure 4 illustrates results for the third statement of the scale, "I feel relaxed when I speak in English, regardless of whether I make any mistakes.". In the pre stage, 87.5% of the participants manifested to strongly disagree or disagree, while in the post stage, results show that the same percentage of participants now strongly agree or agree with the statement, indicating that after the intervention, they show a highly positive perception about feeling relaxed when speaking English even if they make a mistake.

**Figure 4**

Results Item 3: "I feel relaxed when I speak in English, regardless of whether I make any mistakes".



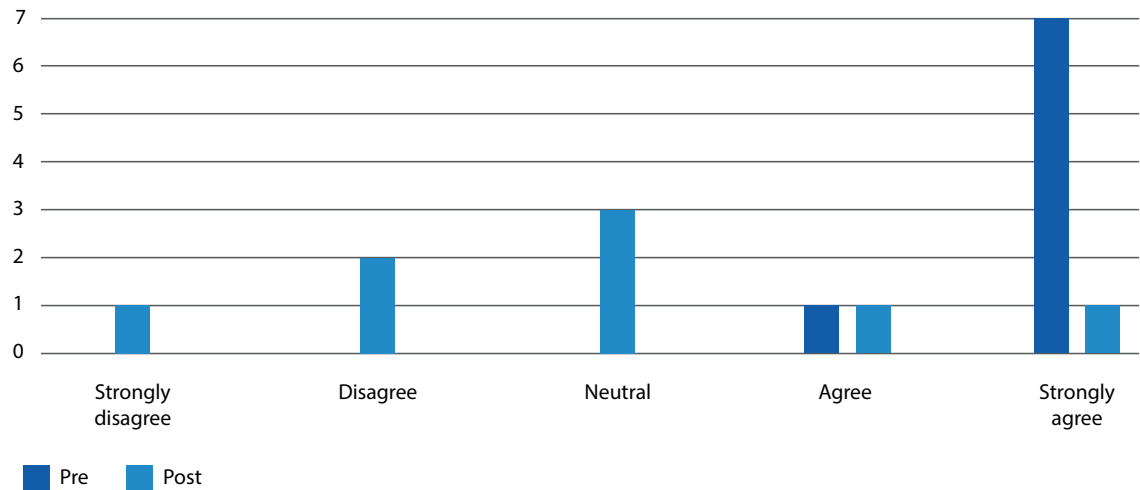
Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).



As for the results from the fourth statement, “I worry that my classmates will laugh at me when I speak in English”, 100% of the participants answered to strongly agree or agree with the statement (As shown in Figure 5), showing that all the participants feared that their classmates would laugh at them when speaking English. However, in the post-stage, 37.5% of answers are strongly disagree or disagree, suggesting that participants’ perception towards this statement is making progress.

**Figure 5**

*Results Item 4: “I worry that my classmates will laugh at me when I speak in English”.*

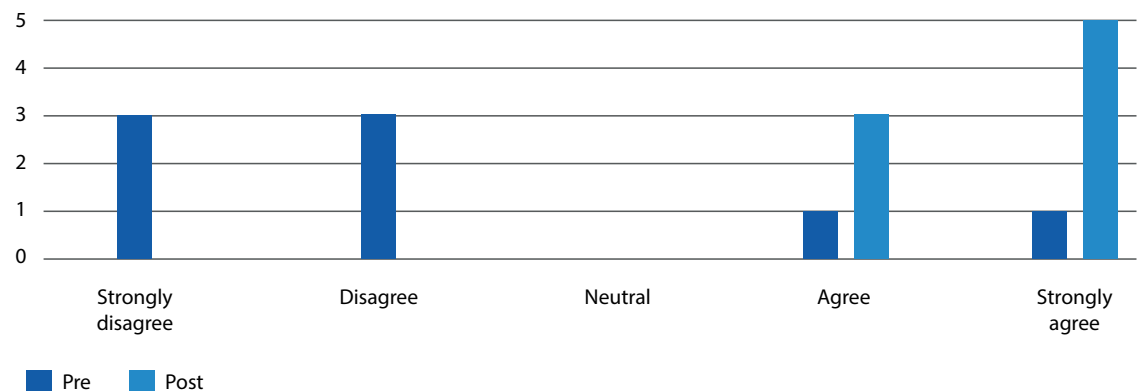


Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).

Figure 6 depicts results for the fifth statement, “I am excited to participate in class by answering out loud in English”. In the pre stage, 75% of the participants manifested to strongly disagree or disagree, showing that most of the participants did not feel excited to participate in the EFL classroom answering out loud in English. After the intervention results changed notoriously, presenting 100% of the answers as strongly agree or agree. Thus, the enthusiasm perceived by the participants progressed from being discouraging to increasing the excitement and interest to participate in the EFL classroom.

**Figure 6**

*Results Item 5: “I am excited to participate in class by answering out loud in English.”*



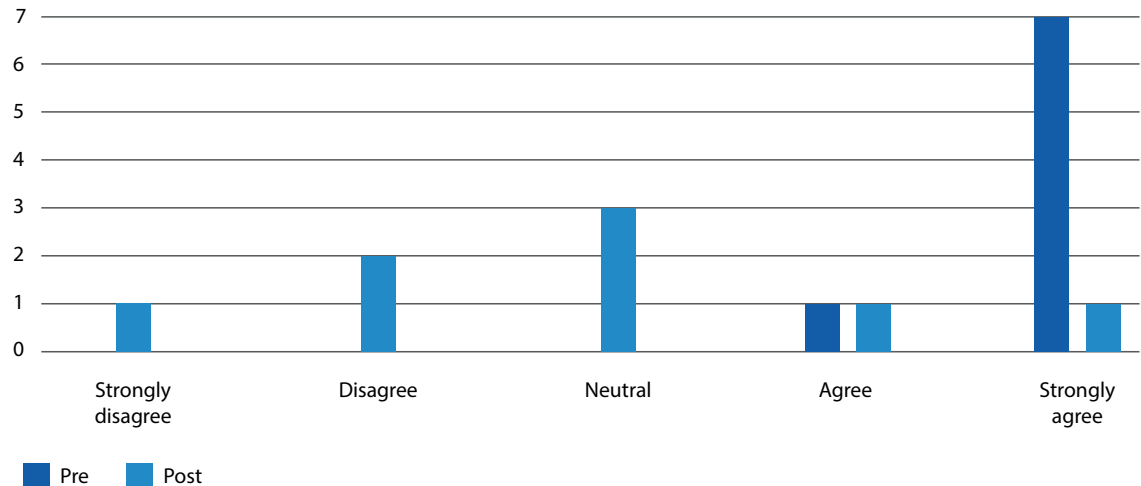
Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).



Results from Item 6: "I feel that my classmates speak English better than I do", illustrated in Figure 7, indicate that in the pre stage, 100% of the participants declared to strongly agree or agree with this statement. After the intervention, significant improvement is presented, as 75% of the participants answered they strongly disagree or disagree. Therefore, it can be concluded that after the intervention most participants perceive that their classmates do not speak English better than they do it.

**Figure 7**

Results Item 6: "I feel that my classmates speak English better than I do".

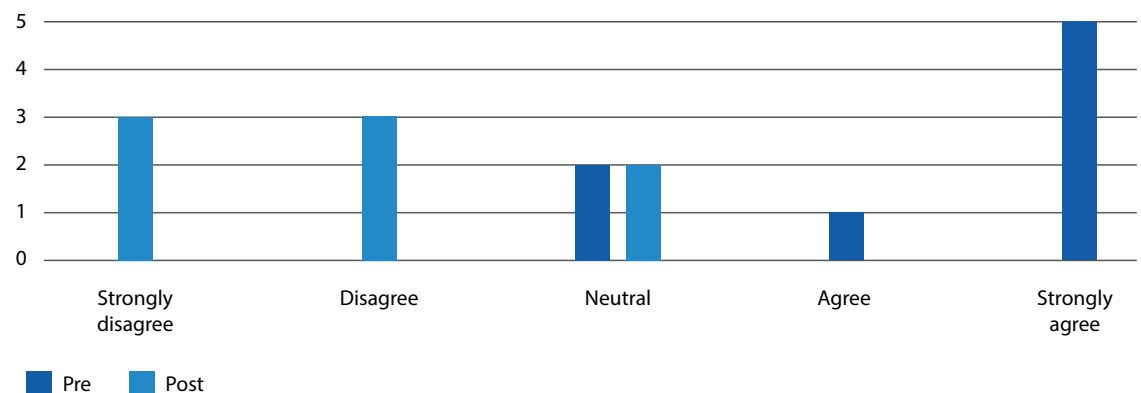


Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).

Concerning the seventh statement, "My heart pounds when I have to speak in English", in the pre stage 75% of the participants answered they strongly agree and agree, as shown in Figure 8, declaring to feel their heart pounding when they have to speak in English, a symptom that can appear as a result of anxiety. On the contrary, in the post stage, 85.7% participants declared to strongly disagree or disagree, showing an improvement in the perception concerning this statement. Consequently, it can be deduced that participants feel more confident after the intervention.

**Figure 8**

Results Item 7: "My heart pounds when I have to speak in English".



Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).

## Specific objective 2: To examine students' perceptions of the effectiveness of short video dubbing in alleviating speaking anxiety.

After analyzing information gathered from the interviews, two main themes were established: participants' attitudes and methodology, along with their corresponding subthemes. Frequencies were calculated considering the number of participants that made statements about these topics.

### Theme one: Participants' attitudes

While reading the transcriptions, the most used words by the participants were self-confidence and less nervousness to describe how they felt after the intervention when having to speak English. Thus, these were considered as the first and second subtheme respectively, presenting both a frequency of 8. The third subtheme was willingness to participate, as 8 participants mentioned they feel motivated to participate in the EFL classroom now. The fourth subtheme was learning awareness, with a frequency of 7 participants that considered the dubbing process helped them improve their learning of the target language. Perceived Improvement in pronunciation and vocabulary were mentioned by the participants. Subthemes, frequencies, and statement examples are illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Theme n°1 Participants' attitudes: Subthemes, frequencies, and statement examples*

Theme	Subtheme	Frequency	Statement examples
1. Participants' attitudes	1.1 Self-confidence	8	"...because I kind of became more confident speaking English and now I feel more confident.." (Participant 4)
	1.2 Less nervousness	8	"...at first you feel nervous doing the dubbing or speaking but then you get used to it and you're not nervous anymore." (Participant 8)
	1.3 Willingness to participate	8	"...I can now participate more in classes speaking out loud without being so embarrassed." (Participant 1)
	1.4 Learning awareness	7	"...I think that it helped me a lot to improve my English vocabulary." (Participant 3)

*Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024)*

### Theme two: Methodology

Enjoyment of the task was considered the first subtheme due to its frequency, with 6 participants stating they liked the task because of reasons such as experiencing a new type of task and the possibility to choose the scenes they dubbed. Subtheme n°2 was collaborative learning, since pair work and collaboration among peers was mentioned by 5 participants as an aspect of the task, which they considered important. The third subtheme was practice, with a frequency of 4 participants. Error correction was the fourth subtheme found in this theme, being mentioned by 4 participants. The identified subthemes reinforce the benefits that the dubbing process provides by following a "learning by doing" approach, where active participation and hands-on implementation takes place through experiential learning. Table 2 shows the subthemes, frequencies, and statement examples for this theme.

**Table 2**

*Theme n°2 Methodology: Subthemes, frequencies, and statement examples*

Theme	Subtheme	Frequency	Statement example
2. Methodology	2.1 Enjoyment of the task	6	"...I liked it when we were recording because it was much more fun, or we would laugh at the bloopers we made; it was entertaining, and being able to do something different from what I usually do, I liked it a lot more." (Participant 8)
	2.4 Collaborative learning	5	"... I liked the workshop because we were able to work in pairs." (Participant 2)
	2.2 Practice	4	"...now I feel less nervous, but if I keep practicing, I'll do better." (Participant 5)
	2.3 Error correction	4	"...it helped me realize that it's okay to make mistakes with some words since, in the end, we're all learning something new." (Participant 1)

*Note. Fuentealba and Quintanilla (2024).*

## CONCLUSIONS

Concerning the influence of the short video dubbing process to reduce students' speaking anxiety levels in the EFL classroom, findings show that after implementing this strategy participants decreased their levels of speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom in all the areas under investigation. It is believed that this improvement is related to a lower affective filter, as participants were encouraged to read aloud with their peers regularly using the videos as input in a relaxed environment, instead of performing live in front of their whole class. Besides, opportunities for practice and error correction helped participants to conceive errors as an inherent aspect of learning rather than something to feel ashamed of. Also, most participants realized their level of the target language was similar to their classmates' level, impacting positively on their willingness to participate and confidence when speaking English. Finally, regarding anxiety physical symptoms, most participants reported not feeling their hearts pounding while speaking aloud in the target language after the intervention.

The interpretation of students' perceptions towards the use of the short video dubbing process for reducing speaking anxiety levels in the EFL classroom revealed that all the students mentioned perceiving an improvement in their self-confidence, less nervousness, and more willingness to participate when speaking English in the EFL classroom after the intervention. Also, learning awareness was stated by most participants, acknowledging that the dubbing process influenced positively on their perceived pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge. This effect could be related to the comprehension activities involved in the dubbing process, where students were asked to demonstrate understanding of the scripts and context of the videos along with continuous reading-aloud practice following the scene as a model, showing that videos are a powerful source of input not only for developing listening skills but also oral skills. As for methodology-related aspects, most participants claimed to have enjoyed the task due to its innovative nature, and the possibility to choose the scenes they dubbed themselves. In addition, collaborative learning and error correction were considered important by the participants.

All things considered, this strategy successfully helped students reduce their foreign language speaking anxiety levels, affirming what Huang (2022) and Sánchez-Requena (2018) propose regarding the use of this type of didactic approach, linking this effect to the fact that performances of this type are not live but behind a screen, lowering the affective filter thus engaging students in the task (Burston, 2005). Participants' perceptions towards the task are also aligned with current findings, demonstrating that the video dubbing process contributes to the development of oral skills and triggers motivation and engagement in the students (Fernández-Costales, 2021; Manurung & Pohan, 2019; Talaván & Costal, 2017) together with the development of collaborative learning as dubbing tasks increase group cohesion, as stated by Huang (2022) "video-dubbing tasks could enhance the level of GC by increasing peer interactions, forming a favorable peer relationship, and promoting team spirit." (p. 15).

As has been determined, the video dubbing process had a positive influence on reducing participants' speaking anxiety levels in the EFL classroom. Results evidenced that participants now manifest to perceive an improvement in their self-confidence, less nervousness and willingness to participate when speaking English in the EFL classroom, as well as reducing anxiety related symptoms such as heart pounding. Moreover, learning awareness was stated by most participants in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation of the target language. It is important to consider that the mentioned findings are result of the different activities included in the process itself, including comprehension activities, individual and paired reading aloud practice, error correction, collaborative learning and the use of audiovisual material as input, together with taking into account participants' interests when designing the task.

It is recommended to apply the video dubbing process in other contexts, such as with students who exhibit high levels of anxiety when performing live in different subjects, as well as for those who do not struggle with this type of tasks, in order to explore the effectiveness of this strategy across both groups.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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