

FLIPPED INSTRUCTION FOR SPEAKING CLASS: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH FOR ENHANCING STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

Flipped instruction becomes an innovative strategy to be used in the development of technology in which students can access the learning materials online. Before class activities, students are given with adequate materials, thus when they are in class they can focus to do practices related to the topic. Several studies have investigated the use of flipped instruction in the teaching learning process and it can be the response for the today's needs of students who have difficulties in engaging classroom activities due to the lack of preparation or understanding towards the given materials. In this research, researchers used flipped instruction to increase the engagement of second-semester students in Intermediate Speaking Class, State Polytechnic of Madiun in the academic year of 2018/2019. The researchers conducted classroom action research for 22 students in two cycles. The findings showed that the students engaged in the teaching-learning activities very well and they were well-prepared to speak in front of the class. Moreover, the scores of speaking performance showed improvement.

Keywords: flipped instruction, speaking, students' engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a skill that is challenging for many students not only in high schools but also in higher education. Although they have studied English for approximately ten years, they are not confident to speak in front of the class. They actually have good performance in receptive skills. However, when they deal with spoken performance, they need more preparation to be able to finish the task.

Harmer (2007), states that in teaching speaking is necessary to provide opportunities for students to practice before performance and to give feedback. The preparation includes the knowledge related to do the task and also deal with the linguistic aspect. Then, the teacher should be able to offer feedback that can help students improve their speaking skill. Since speaking is not an independent skill, the task should encourage the students to apply all the elements of language and make them become autonomous learners.

Based on the preliminary study conducted earlier to second-semester students at English Study Program, State Polytechnic of Madiun, problems that lead to the lack of speaking skill are various. Those can be from the materials and their mastery of linguistic aspects. Many students have problems during speaking activities in the classroom. For example, they are reluctant to

speak in class to show their opinion or to ask questions. They do not have enough background knowledge pertinent to the materials given in class. Furthermore, they have difficulties in linguistic aspects such as grammar and vocabulary. These problems lead to the lack of engagement in speaking class.

Furthermore, the problems of their engagement in class can be caused by their lack of preparation towards the materials for speaking. This leads to their self confidence in which they are afraid of making mistakes or talking a nonsense opinion. It is a common thing that to speak needs background knowledge that can be from reading or listening to materials that are pertinent to the topic. After they have got the materials, they need to practice a lot before speaking in class.

Engagement in speaking class is truly important. According to Barkley (2010: 8), student engagement is “a process and a product that is experienced on a continuum and results from the synergistic interaction between motivation and active learning.” The word continuum may refer to the experiences that change the students’ behaviour or perception towards the teaching-learning process. The synergy of motivation and active learning can be called as student engagement. If the students feel motivated, they will show active participation in class. Motivation itself can be described as a feeling of wanting to do something. It can be seen from how much students are enthusiastic to join in activities.

Moreover, engagement is related to a learning experience that results from attention, enjoyment and involvement (Shernoff, 2013:12). The learning is not only about absorbing knowledge in lecture but also how the students follow the process with a great pleasure. It can be interpreted that the teaching and learning materials should be meaningful to raise students’ attention, enjoyment, and involvement.

Flipped instruction becomes an effective strategy to deal with the students’ issue on engagement in class (Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2016). According to Choiril and Pratama (2016), flipped classroom is “an instructional strategy and a type of blended learning that reverses the traditional educational arrangement by delivering instructional content, often online, outside of the classroom.” The basic concept of flipped class is any activities that are commonly done in class are flipped to be done at home. The traditional class usually has lecture time in which the lecturer speaks in front of the class by explaining materials using a white board. Some of the lecturers also explain materials using the help of technology by displaying slides in the class. However, this stage actually can be done as homework by giving an assignment for students to learn the materials by themselves and if they have any difficulties they can ask about the lecture when they are in class activities.

Flipped instruction also becomes an innovation in teaching-learning process of speaking (Gilboy, Heinerichs, & Pazzaglia, 2015; Roach, 2014). Students live in a digital era that opens a possibility for them to access any information on Internet. Various sources are available as exposures for them to learn English. YouTube is a popular source that provides videos that can be used for teaching and learning process. Besides, it also can be used for uploading teaching materials. Students can access anywhere and anytime and have freedom to pause or continue the explanation. In addition, they conclude that the model can cope with the development of higher order thinking skills and creativity (Roehl, Reddy, & Shannon, 2013).

The development of technology causes a shift in teaching-learning (Nanclares & Rodriguez, 2016). Students can learn not only in class but also outside class with the same quality. In fact, this way is more meaningful for students since they can manage the way they

learn for a certain topic outside the class. Thus, in class, the activities for doing and finishing the tasks would be more effective. Students have had prior knowledge on the materials, as a result when they come to the class, they will engage more in speaking activities. The teachers also have more time to give guidance and assistance to the students and to ask the students to practice their speaking.

There are two main points how to implement flipped instruction based on Bergmann and Sams (2012). Homework is the initial activity for students before coming to the class. In flipped classroom, most teachers use videos as the media to replace lecturing at class. The teachers assign the students to watch the video at home. If the students have difficulties they should make a note to be asked to the lecturer in class. The videos can be made by the teachers themselves or taken from the available ones. There are so many online sources now that provide free teaching videos with good quality. This way can answer the lecturers who have difficulties to record themselves while teaching in front of camera. The class time is the next stage for students to learn the materials. They come to the class with adequate background knowledge. This gives advantages to the process of teaching and learning. In class, the activities will be about checking students' understanding towards learning materials. Besides, the teacher can check whether the students really watch the video or not by giving them opportunity to give response to the materials. After that, the students can do tasks that are pertinent to the materials. A test also can be used as a following activity. The class is used for doing any tasks that need the teacher's assistance and students have many opportunities to ask questions to the teachers.

There are some advantages of flipped instruction. Bergmann and Sams (2012) wrote 15 advantages of flipped classroom. However, the researchers mention only eight points by considering the relevancy with this current research context. Flipping encourages students to engage with technology, helps struggling students, allows students to pause and rewind the lecture, increases student-teacher interaction, allows teachers to know their students better, increases student-student interaction, changes classroom management, and provides a great technique for absent teachers.

By considering the advantages of flipped instruction to overcome the speaking problem that is pertinent to student engagement in speaking class, the researchers conducted research on increasing student engagement in speaking using flipped instruction. Thus, the researchers formulate a problem "How is the implementation of flipped instruction in Intermediate Speaking Class at State Polytechnic of Madiun?"

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed classroom action research to overcome a problem dealing with speaking engagement through several strategic plans. In this case, the flipped instruction was used as a main strategic plan to increase student engagement in Intermediate Speaking Class.

This research took 22 students of Class IIC, English Study Program, State Polytechnic of Madiun. Before enrolling in Intermediate Speaking Class, the students had passed Basic Speaking Class that provided them with knowledge in understanding expressions in both formal and informal registers. Generally, the students were reluctant to speak in speaking class activities. The lecturer needed to encourage them repeatedly to speak. Moreover, the students struggled with their spontaneity in speaking in the classroom. When the lecturer gave a speaking task, they needed more time to have preparation.

The instruments for collecting the data were interview guidelines, an open questionnaire, and speaking tasks. The data were in the forms of field notes, interview transcripts, observation checklist, and students' speaking scores.

To know significance of the process for the most part in the implementation of the action, the researchers used qualitative data supported by quantitative data. In analyzing qualitative data, the researchers did three steps. They were data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 10). Firstly, the researchers selected, focused, simplified and transformed the data in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, and students' scores. Secondly, the researchers organized and compressed the data to lead to conclusions. Thirdly, the researcher drew conclusions from the data display. In addition, the analysis of quantitative data was in the form of categorizing the students' score into six categories which are excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, and very poor.

This research applied four stages (planning, action and observation, and reflection) as suggested by Mc Niff and Whitehead (2002). In planning stage, the researcher found out a plan, flipped instruction, to solve the problems related to student engagement. The researchers made videos to explain the topic to make materials more interesting. The videos were shared to the students via WhatsApp with two purposes: to be downloaded easily and to be studied before coming to the class. Thus, when they came to the class, they had been ready to discuss the topic and to do the speaking task.

In action and observation, the researchers taught the class by implementing the strategic plans of using flipped instruction. There were two cycles conducted in this research. In Cycle 1, the topic was "Describing a Tourist Destination". The topic was made because students of English Study Program, State Polytechnic of Madiun are expected to be able to use English in tourism fields. In Cycle 2, the topic was "Debating". The basic reason for choosing the topic was the necessity for students to be able to express freely their opinions and also to make them experience various activities that promote active learning. Based on Macklem (2015: 52), debating is included as interactive learning. The process of conducting the research is from May 9-16, 2019. During the cycles, the researcher obtained data in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, an open questionnaire, an observation checklist, and students' scores.

Finally, the reflection was done to find out the implementation of flipped instruction. If the student engagement still needed improvement, the cycle would be continued.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The actions for improving students' engagement were done in two cycles. In Cycle 1, there was one meeting. Four days before the meeting, the researchers shared a video about "Describing a Tourist Destination" to the captain of Class C. The video contained a complete material about the given topic and also the description of the assignment. The students were expected to study the contents and prepare for the assignment. Thus, when coming to the speaking class, they had had adequate knowledge to support their understanding to do the speaking task. In class activities, the researcher asked the students to show their pictures on their recommended tourist destination. Then, the students were asked to perform one by one with time allocation approximately 5 minutes. The students performed by giving an opening statement and then describing the tourist destination based on the pictures they had prepared. They were not allowed to read any notes. They had to speak without reading otherwise their scores would be decreased.

Another task for students was that they had to give responses to their peers' performance. The responses could be in the form of questions or comments. All students had given questions on their peers' performance by asking information about the tourist destination. After all students had performed, the researcher closed the meeting by giving feedback on the students' performance.

Based on the results of the action seen in the data from observation and an open questionnaire, it can be seen that there were an improvement in students' engagement in class activities. Most students were more prepared to perform in front of the class individually. They could explain their own recommended tourist destination without looking at their notes and also they did not show too many pauses while speaking. They were able to manage their performance within the time allotted. Besides, students were able to ask to their peers without feeling afraid of the quality of the questions.

Students' opinions on flipping instruction were all positive. It gave them more time to practice that made them well-prepared to perform in class. They also said that they were not confused what to do at class because they had studied the materials before. The material was interesting because it was in the form of video completed with music. Besides, the material in the form of video could be saved in their gadget that made them not worried that they would not get the copy of materials from the lecturer. They also thought that it was effective and efficient.

However, there were some students who wrote down notes behind the pictures they had printed. It showed that some students were not ready to perform spontaneously in class. Some students also got startled when they had to ask questions to the presenters. In addition, based on the questionnaire, there was a suggestion for the next meeting that the lecturer should explain the instruction once again in class before the speaking activities began. Therefore, the researchers continued to apply flipping instruction in Cycle 2 to optimize the students' engagement.

In Cycle 2, the researchers held one meeting to teach "Debating". To provide students with knowledge on the topic, the researchers gave a video on debating. The video contained a material about how to give opinions, the plans of activities, rules of the activities, things to be prepared for the class, and the motions for debating. There were some steps applied in the classroom in this cycle. First, the researcher asked students about their understanding on the material on this meeting. Then, the researcher asked students to prepare all equipments to do the activities. They should prepare a glass on the table and they were given straws with different colors, green and red. These equipments had been informed to the students to support the process of debating. For showing that they wanted to show agreement to the motion, they had to raise the green straw. If they wanted to show disagreement, they had to raise the green straw. If the opinion was excellent and without reading the notes, the lecturer gave a green straw. If the opinion was weak and the students read notes while speaking, the lecturer gave a red straw into their glass. After all students had clear understanding dealing with the activities and the rules, the researcher began to show motions one by one.

The students were so enthusiastic to give their comments on the motion. They seemed to be well prepared with all motions shown. Some students gave their comments without looking at their notes. For only one motion, there were more than 10 students who raised their hand to give comments. This situation was managed well by choosing only six students who raised their hand first. Three students showed agreement, and then three students showed disagreement to the motion.

Based on the results of the action seen in the data from observation and an interview in Cycle 2, it can be seen that there was an improvement in students' engagement. The students were more engaged in activities that gave chances for them to speak their opinion in front of their friends. They were more than ten students who willingly wanted to give opinions for each motion. Moreover, they were able to give their original opinions related to the motions. In this cycle, students looked more excited than they did in Cycle 1 to engage in the speaking activity.

From the aspect of quantitative data, a significant improvement is shown from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. The complete depiction of student scores can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 The conversion table analysis of students' scores

No	Interval	Categorization	Frequency	
			Cycle 1	Cycle 2
1	83-100	excellent	12	14
2	76-82	very good	4	8
3	68-75	good	6	0
4	60-67	fair	0	0
5	50-59	poor	0	0
6	30-49	very poor	0	0

In Table 1, it can be seen, in Cycle 1, six students are in "good" categorization, four students are in "very good" categorization, and 12 students are in "excellent" categorization. On the other hand, in Cycle 2, none of the students are in "good" categorization. Eight students are in "very good" categorization and 14 students are in "excellent" categorization. Thus, quantitative data also showed a significant improvement from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 dealing with the students' speaking performance.

Based on the findings in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, it can be seen that there were improvements on students' engagement and students' speaking scores in Intermediate Speaking Class. By applying the flipping instruction, they were more prepared with the materials for the class activity because they have learned the materials before in-class activities. As stated previously, lack of knowledge and preparation became the main issue of engagement. Giving students materials before in-class activities made them equipped with knowledge and explanation about what they need to do at class. They had more time for preparation including the content, language, and performance.

As a result, they were willingly to be a volunteer to speak during class activity. They also could give responses to their students' opinion in the form of questions or showing agreement and disagreement. They also could perform confidently showing that they were ready to do the task. On the matter of time allocation, using flipping instruction can be more efficient. Normally giving the materials in class needed about 30 minutes. For preparation to do the speaking task they needed more time because they got the materials in class. This conventional teaching-learning process made the time allocation for speaking not optimal. Hence, by applying flipping instruction, activities in the teaching-learning process were optimal because the lecturer focused on encouraging students to finish tasks not presenting the materials and explaining the task.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of flipping instructions in Intermediate Speaking Class improved the student engagement and student scores increased significantly. Students had knowledge on the materials and what to do in the class. They had enough time to do preparation related to speaking task. Since the lecture was given on the form of videos that could be watched anywhere and anytime, the teaching-learning process was more efficient. Therefore, students could utilize in-class activities to focus on exploring their speaking skill through speaking tasks.

Some suggestions were made for the lecturers, students, and other researchers. For the lecturers, they should be creative in producing materials for flipping instruction to optimize the students' understanding on the materials. For students, they should be cooperative to access the materials that are given for flipping class. Then, for other researchers, they should conduct studies related to flipped instruction that focus on the material development specially designed for flipping classroom. Moreover, there should be more studies on using flipping instruction for another productive skill which is writing.

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