Perceptions Towards the Flipped Approach for English Language Speaking: Preliminary Observations and Recommendations for a University Classroom in Indonesia[1]

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Abstract

In a traditional learning style where the teacher assumes an authoritative position, students may be receiving input rather than producing output. Contrary to this, a flipped classroom model emphasizes more output; furthermore, input is generated by students' own preparation for learning activities that are done in class. With an interest in the flipped classroom model, this paper investigates the perceptions of university EFL students in relation to the development of their speaking skills. A questionnaire was distributed to 12 students enrolled in a General English 4 class at a university in Indonesia. This questionnaire aimed to describe students' satisfaction and experience in learning English through a flipped classroom model. Students' responses from the questionnaire indicated that the flipped classroom model is a viable approach that can have a positive influence on students' learning satisfaction and experience. The study also indicated that students particularly enjoyed speaking activities which were done in a collaborative manner. Based on this finding, a recommendation for practice is offered.

Keywords: *English, foreign language, speaking skills, flipped classroom*

Introduction

A flipped classroom model is the opposite of a traditional classroom setting. While a traditional classroom model refers to teachers delivering their lectures inside the classroom (Limniou et al., 2018), a flipped classroom model has the students learn the lessons outside class in order to allow time for practical learning activities inside the classroom. According to Rhodes and DeLozier (2016), flipped classrooms "refer to the practice of assigning lectures outside of class and devoting class time to a variety of learning activities" (p. 141). The activities done inside the flipped classroom normally comprise activities that emphasize student-centered learning, with the teacher being a guide or facilitator. In terms of English language teaching, the flipped approach has been found to be valuable for the purpose of English language practice (see Chen Hsieh et al., 2017; Alsowat, 2016). This approach allows learners to prepare before class, and for the teacher to use class time to work on what the learners had prepared. The flipped model may thus be beneficial for contexts where English is learned as a foreign language (EFL). Through this model, teachers can look forward towards more time outside the classroom for learners' development of English. This may be useful, especially for learners' development of speaking skills. Often, learners' English-speaking skills get sidelined due to limited time or resources. The teacher may also encounter difficulty in working with each learner in the class, especially if there are many students (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2018). With an interest in the feasibility of the flipped approach to teach speaking, this paper will examine the satisfaction of students towards the development of English-speaking skills through a flipped approach. From there, a recommendation for practice is provided.

Literature Review

The Flipped Model

The flipped model allows students to be self-directed in their learning. Mainly, they are able to manage when and where they access the materials for learning. Besides encouraging students to work independently, the flipped approach also engages different cognitive processes (Zainuddin, 2017). For

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instance, the flipped classroom approach allows the development of soft skills needed to complete a learning task. These skills include personal responsibility, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, respect, and punctuality (Lestari, 2021). Furthermore, studies have indicated that there is a link between the flipped model and students' learning style in that students may or may not be receptive towards the learning expectations required to engage in a flipped setting. When preparing materials for a flipped setting, this needs to be considered in order to ensure that most, if not all, students receive optimal instruction and guidance from the teacher (Afrilyasanti et al., 2016), especially when online tools are used to deliver the teaching and learning activities (Loo, 2020). With the flipped approach, students also become accountable towards their learning. In this setting, students will need to complete tasks before attending a lesson in order to be able to participate fully in the corresponding activities held in class with facilitation from the teacher (Zainuddin et al., 2019).

It should be noted that while the flipped approach encourages independence among students, not all of them will find this learning method appealing. There will still be students whose preference is to be guided directly by their teachers (Mubarok et al., 2019). Besides self-regulation, the flipped approach also encourages social collaboration between students. As reported by Heryana et al. (2022), using the flipped classroom allowed learners to interact with classmates outside of class, and it also gave them the opportunity to work on problem-solving tasks on their own, which were subsequently discussed with the teacher in class. What this also shows is how the flipped classroom actually offers opportunities for learners to come to class with output in hand that their teacher can work on (Heryana et al., 2022). Hence, the flipped approach also creates more opportunities outside of class for contact with learning materials. The characteristics of a flipped model are proposed by Hwang et al., (2015, pp. 451–452), which were derived based on a review of related studies:

1. *Changes in the Usage of Class Time*: Those teaching contents that were traditionally taught through direct instruction and can be understood by students on their own are provided in other forms, such as video, for students to learn outside the classroom. Besides, in-class discussion, projects, and problem solving are included in the class to help students cultivate their analytical and judging abilities and apply what they have learned.

2. *Changes in the Usage of Time Outside the Class*: The time used to do homework is moved to the class time. Different ways of self-learning, such as watching videos, are scheduled before the class time.

3. *Time Outside of Class* is designed for students to *Gain Knowledge* at the remembering and understanding levels.

4. *Peer Interaction, Student–Teacher Interaction, and Problem-Solving Skills* are emphasized in class. Students gain knowledge at the analyzing, evaluating, and applying levels.

5. *Technology is Used, Especially Video*. While some scholars have argued that technology is not a necessary element for self-learning before class time, undeniably it is the easiest way to present teachers' instruction of the learning contents. Besides, teachers can manage the video and teaching materials for students more conveniently through teaching platforms or other online systems, and have interaction with students before and after class. Therefore, technology benefits the implementation of the flipped classroom.

Since the flipped model affects what happens outside the formal classroom, several considerations need to be made when using this teaching method. To use the flipped approach, the teacher needs to familiarize students with learning materials that they will encounter when learning independently. Besides the materials, students also need to be exposed to the learning processes expected for the lesson (Pratiwi et al., 2022). However, the flipped approach requires more than just proper planning from the teacher and commitment from the students; other factors such as equipment and accessibility are also important (Lestari, 2021; Kondo, 2018). As such, it should be noted that it is not solely up to the teacher to ensure the success of the flipped classroom; the school or institution also has an important role to play. Equipment to support and sustain a flipped model

must also be prepared, as well as technicians who can assist teachers create appropriate lessons (Afrilyasanti et al., 2016).

The Flipped Model in English Language Education

For the English language classroom, the flipped model is valuable as it can encourage more contact time with materials, classmates, and the teacher, all of which may contribute to the improved development of students' language proficiency (Zainuddin et al., 2019). The flipped classroom also frees teachers and students from traditional, and culturally-rooted, pedagogical approaches for the teaching and learning of English (Safiyeh & Farrah, 2020). As such in terms of English language development, the flipped approach has been found to be helpful (for a review of studies on the use of the flipped model in a speaking class, see Santhanasamy & Yunus, 2022). In the context of Indonesia, research has reported a generally positive view towards use of the flipped approach (e.g., Afrilyasanti et al., 2016; Afrilyasanti et al., 2017). Researchers have also reported the extent of improvement, especially in learners' productive skills of writing and speaking (Mubarok et al., 2019). There have been reports on the improvement of writing proficiency (Afrilyasanti et al., 2016; Afrilyasanti et al., 2017), as well as on speaking (Taufik, 2020). Despite this observation, many classrooms, including those that are flipped, still focus on students' writing development. This may be due to pressure to ensure students' passing of national examinations, for which speaking is not a significant element (Taufik, 2020). This brings about the need to examine the feasibility of using the flipped approach to teach speaking as a means to allow more time outside of class for learners' improvement of communication skills. Furthermore, speaking may be a more complex language production process, as there are more variables to consider, especially in a setting where English is spoken as a foreign language (EFL). Some variables may include the variety of English used, the accent and the perspectives held towards particular accents if any, as well as the organization of content, which can be driven by cultural tendencies. Nonetheless, while studies regarding the teaching of speaking using the flipped model may be limited, at least one study indicated students' positive response towards the flipped model. Abdullah et al. (2019) reported that participants showed improvement in speaking performance not only in the classroom, but outside of it as well. Moreover, participants also had an overall increase in self-regulation strategies which were observed not only in speaking classes, but in other courses as well.

The Study

The aim of this study was to examine the perceptions of students towards the use of a flipped model for the teaching of speaking. This was premised upon classroom-based action research, which Mettetal (2001) briefly defines as planning and actions taken to improve the teaching and learning situation. This process, however, should not just be limited to the teacher; rather, it needs to be a collaborative effort where students and possibly other colleagues are involved (Cain, 2011). Furthermore, Cain (2011) argued that while classroom-based action research may be restricted to a unique context, there may still be resonance with other classrooms or teaching and learning experiences that may spur research-based actions by other teachers.

Study Setting

This study may be considered the initial phase of a classroom-based action research investigation, where preliminary insights regarding students' perceptions were gathered. This study involved participants (*n* = 12) who were EFL students taking General English 4 at Universitas Klabat, Indonesia, of which six were male and six were female. At the time of this study, their ages ranged from 19 to 24. These students had taken General English 3 prior to taking General English 4. All of the students' first language was Bahasa Indonesia. Some of the sample lesson plans used are shown below.

Sample Lesson 1: *News Story*

    Pre-class Activity (flipped):
- Students review tenses in English.
- Students learn some new vocabulary words related to news articles.
    o Examples of vocabulary: attacks, chases, crashes, misses, overturns, rescues, survives, threatens
- Students watch a news story and discuss the news by answering the following questions:
    o What happened (where and when)?
    o What else was happening at the time?
    o What has happened since?
    o What's happening now?

    In-class Activity:
- Students are divided in groups according to their major and asked to present a news related to their major. They are given 15–20 minutes to prepare the news story, including PowerPoint slides. After a group presents, one of the other groups gives a short summary or shares the main points of the news story.

Data Collection and Analysis

To determine the feasibility of using the flipped approach to teach speaking, a questionnaire was employed to examine students' satisfaction and experiences. Student satisfaction was considered to be a valuable construct given that the flipped approach required students to be motivated in order to learn on their own, or prepare materials before class meetings with teachers (Afrilyasanti et al., 2016; Afrilyasanti et al., 2017). Students' experiences, on the other hand, would be useful for the teacher and others in the planning of subsequent flipped lessons. The questionnaire consisted of eight questions that were distributed through a Google Form. The questions focused on student satisfaction in participating in the flipped classroom model. The survey was made available both in Bahasa Indonesia and in English to ensure that students really understood the questions. The survey was distributed to the students prior to their final examination. This was to minimize bias among the students, especially if they were already aware of their final examination results. Data from the questionnaire was collected and analyzed descriptively.

Results

The results of the survey are shown in Table 1. As can be seen from student responses, there was a generally positive perception towards the use of a flipped approach. In summary, more than half the students enjoyed the approach (Questions #1 and #5), with the opportunity to practice with their classmates being mentioned as the most enjoyable and helpful activity (Questions #3 and #4). This observation is in light with the study of Kondo (2018), which reported how the study environment, including the presence of peers, was an important contributor to students' motivation in speaking activities. The students seemed to be able to self-regulate their own learning as well, seen through their responses to Questions #2 and #7. Finally, through the use of a flipped approach, the actual class session with their teacher could be organized to be more active (Question #7).

Table 1 *Results of Students' Satisfaction and Experience With the Flipped Approach*

No	Question/Statement	Response
1.	How much did you enjoy the class?	
	I really enjoyed the class	**66.7%**
	I enjoyed the class	33.3%
2.	How much of the lessons did you understand from this class?	
	I understood everything	8.3%
	I understood most things	**83.3%**
	I understood some things	8.3%
3.	Please choose 3 activities you enjoyed the most:	
	a) *Presentations*	21.4%
	b) *Debate*	14.3%
	c) *Practicing (Drills) on the white board*	14.3%
	d) *Practicing with partners/in groups*	**28.6%**
	e) *Listening activities*	21.4%
4.	Please choose 3 activities that helped you the most:	
	a) *Presentations*	21.7%
	b) *Debate*	13.0%
	c) *Practicing (Drills) on the white board*	8.7%
	d) *Practicing by partners/groups*	**26.1%**
	e) *Listening activities*	**26.1%**
	f) *F) Others (please specify)*	4.3% (Speaking Exam)
5.	Did you enjoy the class by using most of the time in class doing work, and reading the lesson at home?	
	a) <u>*Yes*</u>	**91.7%**
	b) *No*	8.3%
6.	Please state the reason why for your answer to question #5.	
	a) *Helpful and effective*	**5**
	b) *Better focus*	1
	c) *It trains me to study independently*	1
	d) *Prefer lesson in class and do work at home*	1
	e) *Easier to understand*	2
	f) *It's better*	1
	g) *We can discuss with our teacher as our guide*	1
7.	Does preparing at home help you perform well in class?	
	a) *Yes*	**75.0%**
	b) *Neutral*	25.0%
8.	Is there something helpful and new in the flipped classroom model of learning that you do not get in a traditional classroom model?	
	a) *A more independent study*	8.3%
	b) *Yes, more active learning in class*	**50.0%**
	c) *Yes*	16.7%
	d) *No*	8.3%
	e) *No response*	8.3%

Discussion and Recommendation for Practice

The results from the questionnaire showed an overall positive light on the use of a flipped approach for the teaching of English-speaking skills. Based on the findings, it may be assumed that the participants were ready and willing to take on some of the learning responsibilities outside of class time. Teachers can maximize this to dedicate the class time to be more active, where the students can interact directly with the teacher. When this is done for speaking lessons, students will certainly benefit through a more active session with the teacher and other classmates. Furthermore, the findings from the questionnaire also indicated that the students viewed work in pairs and in small groups positively. This may not be surprising, given that the context of Indonesia is one that values collectivism. As such, learning activities that are done with classmates may be more appealing for the

students (see Gayatri et al., 2023). The teacher should leverage this observation, and strive to create activities that promote cooperation and collaboration among students. This may be achieved by organizing dialogues or conversations with classmates, or as indicated in the responses to the questionnaire, communication activities that involve a certain amount of interaction, such as presentations and debates. The former can be organized according to topics that students themselves choose, or even assigned by the teacher. Presentations may serve as a valuable opportunity for students to practice speaking to an audience; using visual aids; and also instilling confidence in addressing their classmates' questions. The latter activity, on the other hand, could be very useful to enhance students' critical thinking skills, and their ability to employ persuasive rhetorical strategies in their speeches (see Arung & Jumardin, 2016). These alternative speaking activities need to be considered and planned carefully; an example is shown in Table 2. This Table may be used as a template to guide other English-speaking classes or lessons.

Table 2 *Recommended Speaking Activities With Peers*

Component	Activity	Purpose of Activity
Topic	*A concept or idea that is generally known to the students*	*A concept or idea that is generally known to the students, but viewed or received differently*
Elements of Speaking Skills to be Taught	Speaking clearly Speaking to an audience (information transmission)	• Speaking clearly • Speaking persuasively to an audience and to an opposing team (information negotiation and creation)
Other Skills to Be Taught	Preparing visual aids	• Critical thinking (information synthesis) • Respect (for differences in opinions)
Assessment	Clarity of speech and presentation	• Persuasiveness of speech • Criticality and novelty of ideas • Ability to defend and promote one's position

As is well known, lessons and materials for the flipped model need to be appealing to ensure that students' motivation towards independent learning is maintained (Afrilyasanti et al., 2016; Afrilyasanti et al., 2017). Besides the appeal, the flipped lesson also needs to be familiar to the students, so that they would be able to work on it on their own outside of the classroom.

Concluding Remarks

English is a foreign language in Indonesia, and the language often is being taught in order students to pass exams, such as the national exam (Zein et al., 2020). Driven by the desire to prepare students for this exam, lecturing about the English language has been heavily used in order for students to absorb as much information as possible. While this method has been useful to a certain degree, it does not necessarily support students' development in communication, especially in speaking. Hence, findings from this current study provide some initial insights into how the flipped approach may be a viable practice to counter a teacher-centered English language approach. Specifically, the results as seen through the satisfaction and experience of the participants indicated a positive disposition towards the flipped classroom model. The positive outcome was deemed to be related to elements of the flipped classroom model that students did not find in the traditional lecture classroom model, such as being able to practice speaking with their classmates outside of class time. Future research may consider organizing a longitudinal study to examine the impact of using a flipped approach in developing students' speaking skills. A longitudinal study could also include other sources of qualitative data, such as observation and interview data. It may also take into account data from other courses which may require students to speak in English. Another research alternative is to compare conventional approaches to teaching English, such as a teacher-centered classroom, with the flipped approach. This area still requires further examination, given that the Indonesian context and other parts of the region, still place the teacher in the position of being an authority.

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