

## APPLYING THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

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| ARTICLE INFO                 | ABSTRACT   |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Received:</b> 09/02/2023  | Flipped classroom is an approach that is rapidly gaining recognition as a useful teaching approach among learners in Vietnam. The study aims at applying the flipped classroom model to improve speaking skills for students at a high school in Vietnam. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study. The data of the study were collected from pre and post speaking test scores and semi-structured interviews. A total of 35 students and one English language teacher participated in this study. The test score results show that before attending the flipped classroom students' speaking skills were not really good enough; however, after the course students performed considerably better on the posttest than pretest. The interview results indicated that the majority of students have made progress and have been able to increase their fluency, pronunciation, comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary and students all felt quite satisfied because they have learned something new and can pronounce the words correctly. The findings of this study revealed that flipped education, which is a form of blended learning, boosted students' language learning, especially speaking skills. |
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| Flipped classroom            |  |
| Flipped classroom approach   |  |
| Speaking skill               |  |
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## ÁP DỤNG LỚP HỌC ĐẢO NGƯỢC ĐỂ NÂNG CAO KỸ NĂNG NÓI CHO HỌC SINH TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG TẠI VIỆT NAM

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| THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO                  | TÓM TẮT  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Ngày nhận bài:</b> 09/02/2023   | Lớp học đảo ngược đang được công nhận là một phương pháp giảng dạy hữu ích đối với người học tại Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu này nhằm mục đích áp dụng mô hình lớp học đảo ngược để cải thiện kỹ năng nói cho học sinh tại một trường trung học phổ thông ở Việt Nam. Cả hai phương pháp định lượng và định tính đều được sử dụng trong nghiên cứu này. Dữ liệu của nghiên cứu được thu thập từ điểm bài kiểm tra trước và sau khi tham gia lớp học đảo ngược và các cuộc phỏng vấn. Có 35 sinh viên và 1 giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Kết quả điểm kiểm tra cho thấy trước khi tham gia lớp học đảo ngược, kỹ năng nói của học sinh chưa thực sự tốt; tuy nhiên, sinh viên đã thể hiện tốt hơn đáng kể trong các bài kiểm tra sau khi tham gia lớp học đảo ngược. Kết quả phỏng vấn cho thấy đa số học sinh đều có tiến bộ, tăng được mức độ lưu loát, phát âm, đọc hiểu, ngữ pháp, từ vựng và các em đều cảm thấy khá hài lòng vì đã học được điều mới và có thể phát âm chuẩn các từ. Kết quả của nghiên cứu này chỉ ra rằng lớp học đảo ngược, một hình thức học tập kết hợp, thúc đẩy việc học ngôn ngữ của học sinh, đặc biệt là kỹ năng nói. |
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| Phương pháp lớp học đảo ngược      |  |
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| Dạy học tiếng Anh                  |  |
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## 1. Introduction

It is undeniable that English is an international language, which is used across the board including communication, science, education, aviation, commerce, technology and tourism. There are more than 53 countries and territories where English is used as official language nowadays. English has become a greatly important tool for people to get accessed and updated to a large amount of knowledge from all over the world. As the international commercial contacts between Vietnam and regional countries as well as other nations around the world have rapidly developed, English has become the first-choice foreign language in contemporary Vietnam. This expansion was indicated by Vietnam's membership in such organizations as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Consequently, international investors are increasingly investing in the country's commercial potentials and looking for a professional workforce with a great command of the English language. However, "the communicative competence in English of Vietnamese workforce has not met the requirement of the employers" [1, p.119]. It is, therefore, vital to master English to create more opportunities in life for learners.

Flipping the classroom is more suitable to prepare learners a good command of the English competency, especially equip learners capacities in communication skills. It is true to say that the ability to communicate in English clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learners at school and success later in every phase of life. As a requirement of the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), speaking skill is included in most of the English tests for students throughout their studies. Moreover, the English speaking test is a mandatory part of the English proficiency output test for high school students upon graduation. Therefore, speaking is the foundation of communication that teachers should encourage and facilitate their students to develop during their academic years. Applying flipped classroom model into classrooms to find out its effects on teachers' teaching and students' learning is essential [2].

Bergmann and Sams [3] stated that the flipped classroom is the model to convert teaching and learning model. It exchanges the commonly model which inverts homework to be done in class time, and the exercises or activities in class to be done at home to minimize the students-teacher interaction and student-student interaction. Similarly, Houston and Lin [4] stated that the flipped classroom model is the whole classroom or homework paradigm is flipped through infusing the technology, thus, the interaction in the classroom could be maximized. It rearranges how time is spent both in and out class to shift the learning that should be learned. Moreover, the flipped classroom inverts teaching methods, delivering instruction online outside of class and moving homework into the classroom. It is a form of blended learning where learners are asked to view short e-learning at home or on their own time, and prepare them for the next meeting which will be discussed in group [5].

More importantly, the flipped classroom is an approach which students are introduced to content at home and practice working through it at school [6]. It is also a good way to create an active, safe, and enjoyable atmosphere where teachers can encourage and praise students to build their confidence. It plays an important role in contributing to the better students' speaking performance. In the same token, Bishop and Verleger [7] pointed out that the flipped classroom model can help teachers and students improve interaction in the classroom [7]. It can be also an effective and applicable way to enhance students' speaking performance. Apparently, it is teacher's responsibility to create a positive language-learning environment, which makes students feel comfortable and safe to participate in [8].

In the light of the above discussion, the researcher has been inspired and motivated to conduct the research on the effectiveness of flipped classroom in teaching speaking skills with the title of "Applying the flipped classroom to improve speaking skills for high school students in Vietnam". The study aims at applying the flipped classroom model to improve speaking skills for students at

a high school in Vietnam. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set to be obtained: (a) to investigate the benefits of using the flipped classroom model in enhancing students' speaking skills; (b) to find out both students and teachers' perceptions regarding the flipped classroom approach used in the classroom. The study aims to answer two research questions:

1. What is the effectiveness of the flipped classroom teaching model in improving students' speaking skills?
2. What are the students' and teachers' perceptions regarding to the flipped classroom?

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

The participants of the study were one English language teacher and 35 students. These students enrolled in a class at a high school in the five-week summer semester of the 2021 - 2022 school year. The students were at 11th grade whose English proficiency were from the upper elementary to pre-intermediate level as judged by a placement test at the start of their entry into the school. Their ages ranged between 16 and 17. Their level of English proficiency varied, and some of them lacked motivation to improve their speaking or listening abilities, especially since the spoken language assessments did not contribute towards their final grade. They favored to devote their time and energy to writing and reading assignments because more practice results in better final grades.

### 2.2. Instruments

The data of the study were collected from pre and post speaking test scores and semi-structured interviews. The pre-test and post-test were designed based on Arikunto's speaking test and assessed based on the speaking scoring rubric attributed to Arikunto [9]. The two tests focused on the performance of contents and skills related to grammar, vocabulary, fluency and pronunciation.

Semi - interview questions were taken from the interview questions proposed by Danker [8]. After five-weeks of applying the flipped classroom strategy in the classroom, five students and one English language teacher were interviewed for this study in order to get the necessary data. For the success of this method, all participant information was recorded. In specific, five students were interviewed to gain a thorough grasp of the perspectives regarding the subject matter of the flipped classroom approach. Semi-structured interview session with the course's English language instructor was held to verify the responses.

## 3. Results and Discussion

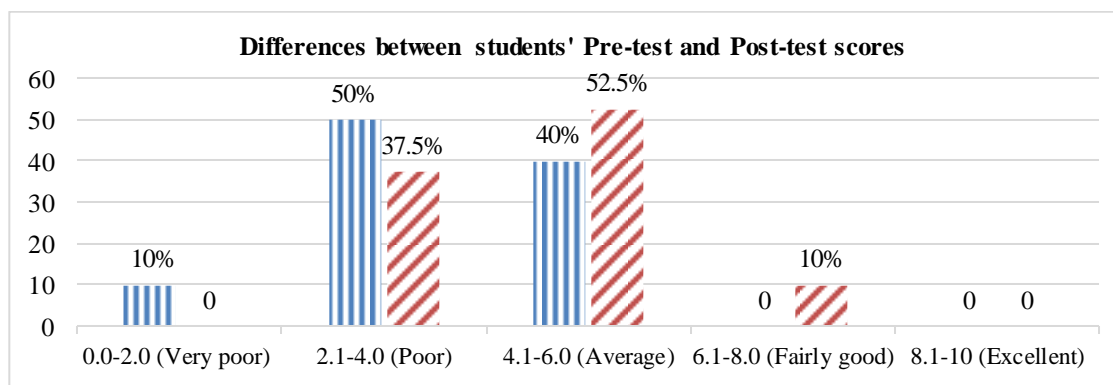
### 3.1. Results of Pre-test and Post test

In order to answer the first research question which tends to investigate the effectiveness of using the flipped classroom approach to improve students' speaking skills, the scores of pretest and posttest were collected from school database and then computed through SPSS for statistical descriptive analysis. Furthermore, students' test scores were interpreted by using Arikunto's score interpretation criteria (see Table 1) [9].

**Table 1.** Interpretation of students' test score

| Final Score | Degree    |
|-------------|-----------|
| 8.1 - 10    | Very Good |
| 6.1 - 8.0   | Good      |
| 4.1 - 6.0   | Fair      |
| 2.1 - 4.0   | Poor      |
| 0.0 - 2.0   | Very Poor |

It can be seen that there seems to have slightly differentiation of students' speaking skills achievement in the pre-test and post test scores, as in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** Results of pretest and post test scores

Figure 1 shows that there was a significantly differentiation between students' pretest and posttest scores, ranging from poor to fairly good speaking competency. More specifically, results of the pre-test indicated that before attending the flipped classroom, students' scores ranged from Band 0.0 - 2.0 (10%) to Band 4.1 - 6.0 (40%), corresponding to the ability of very poor to average speaking skills. In contrast, after the course, students' posttest scores were slightly increased, ranging from Band 2.1 - 4.0 (37.5%) to Band 6.0 - 8.1 (10%) which were signified from poor to fairly good level of speaking ability. Furthermore, 40% of students who scored Band 4.1 - 6.0 in the pretest significantly increased up to 52.5% in the posttest.

In short, it can be said that before attending the flipped classroom, students' speaking skills were not really good enough; however after the course, their scores were notably increased. Students performed better after the flipped classroom approach was used. In other words, the flipped classroom approach is really beneficial for improving students' speaking skills.

### 3.2. Interview results

In order to answer the first research question which tends to find out both students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the flipped classroom approach used in the classroom, interview results were collected and then analyzed qualitatively.

#### 3.2.1. Students' beliefs regarding the flipped classroom approach used in the classroom

All students believe that learning through the flipped classroom approach makes them motivated in the learning process. They understood better through the video presentation.

They were able to communicate using a variety of terminology relevant to frequent subjects including studies, interests, and free time. Several students were pronouncing words correctly and speaking English with ease. They previously feared giving presentations in front of the class; however, they then were very confident and able to speak English without fear. Thus, it can be clearly seen that the videos were very helpful for teaching them grammar and vocabulary and for improving their speaking and listening abilities. The students were extremely enjoyable, enthusiastic, and more involved in their learning and presentation skills during the five weeks of class activities. The excerpts below are some examples supporting what they claimed.

*Interviewee 1: Before that I am not good at speaking... but now I am trying slowly learning... I think my grammar, pronouns, presentation, reading, listening skills are getting much better... This course surely helped me to learn speaking... I can speak now quite fluently... No fear...No shy... I like speaking English every time and every where...*

*Interviewee 2: All my skills have improved good... Our teacher taught us very enthusiastically... Can understand better if like this teaching... I like this class very much.... My presentation skill also is much better than before.*

*Interviewee 3: my speaking skills have been improved a lot since I attended the flipped classroom. As you can see now I can speak better than before... I definitely sure that this flipped classroom has helped us so much in develop English skills. So, Sir... please have this class again...I would like to join more!*

*Interviewee 4: ...I am feeling confident, no nervous... hmm...no shy and no fear of making mistakes when speaking English insided and even outside the classroom also.*

*Interviewee 5: I am confident now is 100% and I do love English class...Interesting actually.*

According to Mohamad [5], nervousness and shyness can only be avoided after students have been taught how to involve during language approaches. Similarly, Yeşilçınar [6] states that students have poor communication skills because they lack confidence. Therefore, throughout the five weeks of the flipped classroom activity, the students were very confident, positive, excited and more engaged in their learning and presentation skills. This indicates that this approach is totally beneficial for students in developing English skills.

In the light of students' belief about the flipped classroom, it can be said that flipped classroom approach has helped students to improve their grammar based on their field, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, confidence and other English skills such as reading and listening as well. Hence, it is suggested that the flipped classroom approach should be implemented in improving students' communication skills.

### *3.2.2. Teacher's reflection regarding the flipped classroom approach used in the classroom*

During the five week of using flipped classroom approach, the teacher had different tasks for students in each week. Teacher's reflections regarding the flipped classroom approach used in the classroom are described below:

The first week of the class, when the students were introduced to the flipped classroom, they were ecstatic. The teacher asked the students to watch a suggested video which was related to career and studies at a slow pace with groups in order to understand and act it out exactly from what had been watched. They had no trouble comprehending the teacher's instruction, lessons and the material; hence, they had the motivation to learn English. Bergmann and Sams [3] show that flipped classrooms encourage independent learning in all students. They are free to repeatedly pause and rewind the movie in their own area. In this case, it inspires them to learn more effectively.

*Teacher: Students.. seem excited and motivated when I introduce them about flipped classroom. Some of them.... kept asking "What is flipped classroom?" or "How do they learn with this approach"*

In the second week of the class, the students were motivated and showed positive mindset in the given task which was related to hobbies and free time activities. Several students were prepared to listen and learn; however, there were some of them who were not ready because they were shy to speak and afraid of making mistakes and then their friends would laugh at them. After watching the video that the teacher prepared, all of them seemed to present well for their presentation and the role play was quite similar to what they watched on the video material.

*Teacher: Students want me teach this approach every day, not only this five- weeks course...but every day...because they like it a lot...how nice when teaching like this in the language classroom... hmm...*

In the third week, the students were able to communicate in English with their classmates in the session of questioning and answering. The majority of them participated actively in activities given by the teachers. They were enjoying presenting different situations related to their career, studies, hobbies and free time activities. Before that, several of them were shy to speak because they did not speak in English frequently. Nonetheless, after presentations which were required by the teachers as activities in class, finally these several students tried to speak quite fluently and confidently. In other words, they confidently speak English without fear.

*Teacher: Students were engagements among groups in preparing the presentation, thus all of them performed well, confidently during the presentation.*

In the fourth week, the teacher found that there were engagements among groups in preparing the presentation. Before that, they were a bit confused before beginning the presentation, but then all of them performed well during the presentation and happily share others about their learning habit. According to Bishop and Verleger [7], engaging learners in group activities fosters cooperation and mutual aid, and it can add a competitive element to learning, which may inspire them to work harder for success.

*Teacher: I observed that students actively participated and collaborated well with classmates during the presentation, they also kept sharing the way they learned English and prepare for their presentation.*

In the last week, the students showed their good capacities in teamworking as well as their responsibilities according to different situations given by the teacher. They interpreted the teacher's request for them to use critical thought as a real-world scenario. Therefore, this time, for the communication in the context of the school and classroom, the majority was enthusiastic, enjoyed, and confident in speaking, and they effectively engaged with one another. Houston and Lin [4] claims that the flipped classroom is built on cognitive engagement because the students had only recently begun to study English as using the flipped technique. Accordingly, it is possible to use more class time for critical thinking exercises that required collaboration and teamwork by having students see lessons online before class [8].

*Teacher: Their confidence level was built up internally as they engaged in groups and by watching the video relating with their real-life experience*

On overall reflection, it can be observed that there were some improvements on students' proficiency level of speaking in English; by this time, students can communicate, question, answer, solve the problems about familiar topics in the real life with their classmates. This is in line with several researchers who also conducted the effectiveness of using the flipped classroom approach in the language classroom. These researchers claimed that students in the flipped classroom worked harder than in the traditional classroom because they watched videos that related to their real-life experiences and participated in group activities, which helped them build their internal confidence. This is because they dramatized situations that would later occur in real-life at the workplace in the future. Moreover, these researchers were also mentioning that flipped classroom approach should be implemented for all the courses to achieve the objectives of education [3], [6] - [8].

#### 4. Conclusion

In light of the necessity for students to have a strong command of the English language in language classrooms, the primary goal of this research was to examine the usage of the flipped classroom technique for improving students' speaking skills. This study also seeks to understand how students and teachers feel about adopting a flipped classroom strategy to develop their speaking abilities. According to the results of this study, students can improve their oral communication abilities in English by using a flipped classroom approach.

Based on pretest and post test results, it can be said that there were significant differences between students' pretest and posttest scores. In particular, before attending the flipped classroom students' speaking skills were not really good enough; however after the course students performed considerably better on the post-tests than pretest. Therefore, it is claimed that the flipped classroom approach is truly beneficial for improving students' speaking skills.

Based on the students' interview analysis, the majority of students have made progress and have been able to increase their fluency, pronunciation, comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. These elements were crucial for speaking abilities since they assist the students improve their communication abilities. The students struggled to speak clearly in front of an

audience and were unable to use any English terms. However, after following the session, they presented in front of the class with less anxiety and greater confidence. It is due to the fact that this approach genuinely helps them to improve their speaking skills; hence, most of students preferred that flipped classroom be taught in regular classroom sessions and proposed that the flipped classroom approach be used in language classrooms.

Based on the teacher's interview, after attending the five-week flipped classroom course, students' pronunciation, vocabulary have improved a lot, and they all felt quite satisfied because they have learned something new and can pronounce the words correctly. Additionally, students were not afraid to speak in front of the class; rather, they were able to communicate clearly, displayed less trepidation, and spoke more confidently during group discussions and presentations.

In conclusion, the value of utilizing technology in language instruction has received a lot of attention at school recently. The findings of this study indicated that flipped education which is a form of blended learning, boosted students' language learning, especially speaking proficiency. The participants in the class activities were also inspired and engaged by this strategy, and they performed better when they watched films at home. The flexibility of today's superior technology allowed students to watch films whenever, wherever, and however many times they wished. Despite the short duration of the trial and the learning achievement as the primary focus, this study added to future research supporting the usefulness of blended learning in language learning and teaching as previously discussed. It is hopeful that future research can focus on extending the experiment's duration and analyzing other language skills in order to increase among students in different circumstances and capacities.

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