

REDEFINING A FLIPPED LEARNING CLASSROOM: USING OUTSIDE-CLASSROOM LISTENING PORTFOLIO TO BOOST INSIDE-CLASSROOM SPEAKING TASKS

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Abstract: With the limited time in the classroom, many English language teachers have held a big concern as to how to create more spaces, more time, and more opportunities for learners to use the target language in a meaningful way. By using a qualitative method with different approaches of interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations, this study aims at exploring the effect of adopting a flipped learning model with the integration of listening and speaking on the development of these skills. The study participants were 17 third-year English-major students enrolling in a listening-speaking 6 course at Quang Binh University. The findings showed that learners' listening skills were significantly improved and they appeared to be more confident and more productive when participating in inside-classroom speaking tasks with a well-prepared listening portfolio at home. The article drew an implication that to boost learners' independent learning and maximize the effect of the classroom time, it is vital to apply homework-in-class and classwork-at-home model while integrating skills in language education.

Key words: Flipped learning, listening portfolios, listening-speaking integration

1. Introduction

The mobilized world of the 21st century appears to require its citizens to be equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to respond to its astounding developments, and language learners are also involved in this stream. In the arena of English language teaching and learning, Zwiers (2014) claims that our learners have to learn to use that language in a more complicated way such as analyzing complex texts, arguing, evaluating evidence, and engaging in academic discussions. In fact, in order to prepare for more advanced language to meet different purposes, rather than just daily expressions, such as the academic language standards for higher education or international tests like IELTS or TOEFL, technical languages for future jobs, and deeper language for taking part in more complicated interactions, learners need to be well-prepared. However, with simply asking them to do speaking tasks in the traditional classroom is not adequate. In fact, although language teachers perhaps allow their students a certain amount of time to prepare and generate academic discussions in the classroom, it has been seen that many learners cannot fulfill the tasks due to lack of knowledge, lexical resources on a particular topic as well as their nagging anxiety when using a second language. It causes a common problem in many English-speaking classrooms that students remain silent and unresponsive, participating only to a minimal degree. It poses a need for allowing learners enough time, space and opportunities to access academic language before class by assigning out-of-class work.

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Although in many cases the curriculum has separated language skills into different courses, in the very essence they are integrated and cannot be apart, such as listening and speaking skills. While listening is a receptive skill, speaking is a productive one. When referring to learning a foreign language, Tavil (2000) regards these skills to be very important for communicative competence and states that “it is essential for students to understand the language they are exposed to and to respond appropriately so that they can become competent users of that particular language” (p. 765). There are a variety of studies claiming the positive effect of integrating listening and speaking on learners’ oral communicative competence; however, there is still a research room for innovative teaching and learning approaches to resolve this issue, particularly adopting the flipped learning model in order to maximize the classroom time.

2. Literature review

2.1. Definition of flipped learning

The term “flipped learning” dated back to 2000 with Baker’s college context in Southwest Ohio, United States. With a goal to change the role of the teacher from a mere lecturer or a knowledge transferor to a guide-by-the-side and to reduce class time wasted on students copying the slides, Baker’s idea was to let students access learning materials online before class and utilize the classroom time to assist them in dealing with daunting exercises. This model is called homework-in-class and classwork-at-home model as traditionally students acquire knowledge in a classroom context and then do more practice out of the classroom. In the flipped classroom, students acquire knowledge before the class and use class time to practice and apply concepts and ideas through interaction with peers and teachers. After the class, students reflect upon the feedback they have received and use this to further their learning. This learning approach has brought great benefits to students in many disciplines (Honeycutt & Garrett, 2014). In the field of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), adopting flipped learning approach has attracted considerable attention; however, there is still a limited number of empirical studies in this field regarding how to perform it in skill-integration classroom and how effective it is.

2.2. Benefits of the flipped learning model

With the aim of exploring the effects of the flipped learning approach in a grammar classroom through students’ perceptions on its effectiveness and feasibility, Pudín (2017) adopted a quantitative method. A number of 120 students with higher Malaysian University Entrance Test (MUET) were asked to complete a questionnaire which is then analyzed through SPSS version 24. The findings indicated that most of the students were keen on learning grammar through the flipped classroom as opposed to the traditional grammar one. The study provided ESL practitioners a better insight into students’ preference in learning grammar and ways to create better teaching through blended learning.

In the Vietnamese context, Cao Thi Xuan Lien’s (2017) study examined the effect of the flipped learning approach on students’ learning satisfaction. The study conducted a survey on 67 second-year English-major students at University of Foreign Languages, Hue University. The findings showed that the majority of participants held a positive attitude towards the concerted

classroom model. Some advantages were commented by the participants such as considerably improving writing skill, more time spent on practice, more interesting than the traditional method, attracting more students in classroom activities. However, some difficulties were also pointed out such as overloaded assignments outside class and lack of support from teachers. In line with this, Tran Thi Thanh Quyen (2017) also investigated students' awareness of the flipped learning model administered on 30 ESP students at Can Tho University. In the study, the social network, Facebook, was employed to deliver online lectures and discussions. The results suggested that Facebook is a convenient and effective learning tool in flipped learning method helping learners improve vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication skills.

Overall, the flipped learning model has been increasingly adopted in ESL language classrooms but it appears to be mainly used for a single skill like writing skill or grammar learning. There are no studies found regarding teaching listening and speaking in integration using flipped learning approach. The following part will continue to discuss the benefit of integrating these two skills in developing learners' language performances.

2.3. The integration of listening and speaking skills

In terms of integrating listening and speaking, Tavil's (2010) study aims at examining the effect of applying listening-speaking skill integration in the classroom by implementing tasks and using pre-post tests administered to 180 students from the preparatory classes of Hacettepe University, Turkey. The findings show that students practicing the skills in integration are more successful than those practicing them separately. The study contributes to accustoming learners to combining listening and speaking, in natural interaction, through information-gap tasks. However, its limitation is just using in-classroom-tasks without emphasizing out-of-classroom tasks with skill-integration approach.

Many studies have proposed the benefits of using speaking skill to achieve language learning goals in listening classrooms. It is said that integrating speaking can assist in "facilitating metacognition development, enhancing comprehension and retention of listening content, and creating opportunities for focus on form" (Newton & Nguyen Duc Chi, 2018, p. 4). In line with this, De la Fuente (2002) also claims that a combination of listening and speaking is more effective for learning the meaning of new vocabulary items introduced in aural input than the alternative approach of repeated listening.

Despite its valuable findings, these studies still have some caveats such as putting more emphasis on the benefits of speaking on listening, or productive skill on receptive one, rather than vice versa. Therefore, the data on how listening can boost speaking appears sparse; especially, effective teaching approaches to fulfill this goal are still rare. Moreover, none of them pay attention to using out-of-class work to boost inside-classroom activities. This study fills the gap by adapting a flipped learning method to teach listening and speaking skills with an aim of activating their acquired knowledge from outside into the classroom to maximize the advantage of the classroom time. The research aims to answer the following questions:

- How can outside-class portfolios improve learners' listening skill?
- How can out-of-class listening boost learners' in-class speaking task performances?

3. Methodology

3.1. Instruments

3.1.1. Interview

Interviewing is considered as one of the core data collection methods in qualitative research. Interviews are valuable because if they are properly conducted, they can provide deep insights into people's experiences, beliefs, perceptions and motivations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This method is usually employed as a valuable source of data to triangulate findings of studies. Therefore, in this study, 17 interviews were conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of learners' opinions on the effects of out-of-class listening portfolio on improving learners' listening skills and on in-class speaking activities. Learners were interviewed immediately after their speaking tasks, particularly in post-task stage. After each learner finished their small-group talk, they were asked some questions in English relating to the issue mentioned above. Each interview lasted for about 2 minutes.

3.1.2. Participant observation

Observation methods provide a variety of benefits for researchers, such as checking nonverbal expression of feelings, determining who interacts with whom, grasping how interlocutors communicate with each other, and checking for how much time is spent on various activities (Schmuck, 1997). In this study, the researcher observed learners' speaking task performances and took notes of comments on their strengths and weaknesses. The observation approach was conducted before interviews in order to collect more information on learners' performances before asking key questions to find more data for research questions.

3.1.3. Field note analysis

Field notes which are generated during the researcher's observations help to remember and record the behaviors, activities, events, and other features of the observations. Field notes are intended to be read by the researcher as evidence to produce meaning and an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being studied. The notes may constitute the whole data collected for a research study (e.g., an observational project) or contribute to it, such as when field notes supplement conventional interview data (Schwandt, 2015).

3.1.4. Document analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents which are printed or electronic materials. Data of document analysis requires to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In this study, learners' listening portfolios were analyzed to gain more information on how they helped to improve learners' listening and speaking skills. In particular, portfolios were analyzed based on different parts such as self-evaluation, useful vocabulary, and main ideas.

3.2. Participants and the classroom context

The teaching context was a speaking-listening 6 course for third-year English-major students at university level in Quang Binh University. This course focused on developing the necessary skills and strategies to further students' abilities in listening and speaking (although other language skills were integrated). The classroom participants included in the observation notes were 17 Vietnamese students who majored in English language. Participants' ages ranged between 20 and 21. The number of females accounted for 88.2% while that of males was 11.8%.

During the course, learners were required to complete practicing at minimum three pieces of listening per week and make a portfolio in a guided format and structure. These files were submitted to the instructor (the author) after class for evaluation and analysis and were returned to learners one week later. The author wrote analysis in a small notebook when checking students' out-of-class work.

Teachers instructed learners how to select appropriate talks and reliable listening resources so that learners can both practice listening skills and enrich their general knowledge about the world. Although specific topics were optional and chosen according to learners' interests, there were general topics stated in the syllabus to be followed.

When coming to the classroom, students carried out speaking tasks given by the teacher. While students were working, the instructor also acted as the observer in certain classroom activities. When observing the class, the author wrote shorthand field notes detailing the observations of the students.

The following are teachers' instructions to learners' listening portfolio.

Outside-classroom listening portfolio

Listening selection guidelines

Firstly, learners were advised to choose talks below 10 minutes in length, usually 5 to 7 minutes was more advised. Talks over 10 minutes were generally long enough to easily make the listener tired and demotivated. The reason was that learners not only just finished their listening but also needed to look up new words and learn useful phrases. With an appropriate duration, it appeared that learners were provided more adequate time and space to absorb and acquire the input language in a more productive way.

In addition, choosing a good topic also accounted for a successful listening process. It was believed that what interested you would motivate and inspire you to be persistent with it in a long run. Listening to a second language to understand new information was a daunting task and needed a great effort, so an interesting talk would considerably push learners in their learning process.

Listening resources

Learners were required to choose such types of listening as news, reports and speeches as they provided a richer resource of information and knowledge with more academic languages necessary for learners to reproduce them in the same or relevant topics later.

Some recommended sources were Ted.com (main source), VOA special English (these sources were suggested but there was no limit to others, so students could use any reliable source after discussing with the instructor).

The following is the suggested portfolio format:

Portfolio format

Learners were required to make a table of self-reflection with a specific guideline for each listening time.

Date:

Listening 1: (Listening title)

Part 1: Self-reflection

Table 1. Self-reflection

Time	What to do	Percentage of understanding
1 st time	Listen without subtitle/ subscript and figure out the general idea of the talk.	% -----
2 nd – 4 th time	Listen without subtitle/ subscript and take notes of the main points. The number of times may vary depending on learners' ability but should be 3 times at maximum.	% -----
5 th time	Listen with subtitle/ subscript to check your understanding and your notes. Look up new words in a dictionary and learn useful vocabulary and phrases.	% -----
Final time	Listen without subtitle/ subscript after learning new words and useful phrases.	% -----

Part 2: Useful vocabulary and phrases

In this part, learners wrote down all new words and useful phrases from the listening piece. New words were recorded with their main elements including spelling, international transcript, meaning, and part of speech (these elements were recommended but not limited).

Part 3: Main ideas

In this part, learners noted down the main points of the talk so that they could share with others what they had listened. It was advised that learners should use the mind map to organize the main points, stimulating their brainstorming and recalling language to express an issue in their own way. Learners needed to practice presenting these main contents at home to prepare for classroom speaking tasks.

Inside-classroom speaking tasks

The following are learners' instructions to inside-classroom speaking tasks:

Pre-task: Individual work

Choose a listening topic among the ones you listened to at home and spend some time practicing speaking about it individually (5 minutes).

Notice: Teachers encourage learners to use as many new words and useful phrases from the listening as possible. This will help them remember vocabulary and information necessary for their language use and production.

Main-task**Task 1: Pair-work**

Imagine that you are going to meet three friends at three different times. You are very eager to share with them what you have known from your listening. Now, start up a conversation with a partner and talk about it.

While talking with each other, please feel free to ask questions or have a small discussion about that issue (15 minutes for 3 conversations).

Task 2: Large-group talk

Imagine that you are going to share a particular topic with a large group. Each person will have one chance to stand in front of the class to present a talk in 3 minutes.

Notice: Immediately after each talk, the other members of the class and teacher will raise questions and comment on their performances.

Post-task

Think about the following questions and share your ideas with your teacher and classmates:

1. How useful is portfolio-making to your listening improvement?
2. How can out-of-class listening practice boost your speaking activities on a particular topic in the classroom?
3. Did you have any difficulties when making listening portfolio?

4. Findings and discussions**4.1. How portfolio making improves learners' listening skill*****4.1.1. Findings from document analysis***

The data from document analysis revealed a significant effect of portfolio-making activity on learners' listening skill development, particularly enhancing listening comprehension, and improving vocabulary and general knowledge, which will be presented below.

Enhancing listening comprehension: The analysis from 17 collected portfolios by students showed that for the first time they did not understand much about the content of the talk (with below 50 percent of understanding for all learners) but many of them could figure out the general idea of the talk. Their understanding improved considerably after three times of listening and 90 percent of the students could note down the main points and the average level

of understanding increased to around 75 percent for most of them. After looking up new words and learning useful phrases, learners listened again without the subtitle, and it appeared that the understanding went up to 95 to 100 percent for all learners.

Enhancing vocabulary and general knowledge: It was also seen that many academic words and useful phrases were recorded by learners for later language use. For example, in a listening titled “*climate change*”, a student took notes of useful vocabulary, such as: *atmosphere, carbon dioxide, fossil fuel, emission, global warming, and greenhouse gas*. This activity helped learners improve their vocabulary on a particular topic. In addition, the main-idea part demonstrated that learners had a chance to gather a lot of useful information and knowledge on a certain issue which was substantially essential to their comprehension and language production.

4.1.2. Findings from interviews

The data from interviews showed that all of the learners were in favor of doing portfolio-making task to improve their listening skill because of the following benefits.

Providing more time for practice: All of the participants held a positive attitude toward making listening portfolios outside the classroom. One of the main reasons was that it provided them more time to learn useful vocabulary and phrases, which remarkably enhances their listening comprehension.

Providing an effective way of listening: Most of them (87%) agreed that listening skill could be done by themselves at home without much difficulty as they just needed to use online materials that the teacher provided. With the guided steps, all of the participants approved that they learned the way how to practice English listening in a more effective way.

Providing a chance for self-evaluation: Interestingly, many of them expressed a satisfaction with what they did in the portfolio. In particular, when they had a chance to evaluate their competence after each time of listening, they would recognize their listening ability by themselves. That, in fact, generated an intrinsic motivation in learners who desired to improve themselves.

4.2. How making listening portfolio outside classroom boosts inside-classroom speaking tasks

4.2.1. Findings from classroom observations

The results from classroom observations indicated many benefits of at-home-listening portfolio activity on learners’ speaking task engagement and performances in the class, including making learners more focused, lowering second language (L2) anxiety, enhancing comprehension, and providing more accurate grammar and enhancing vocabulary range in classroom interactions.

Making learners more focused: Data from classroom observations showed that learners were more focused on the topic when they worked individually or with their partners. All of them showed that they were very eager to share their knowledge about the topic. It was also observed that learners were always ready and showed an enthusiastic attitude toward speaking

activities in the classroom when they were well-prepared for the needed knowledge as well as useful topic-relevant language in advance.

Lowering L2 anxiety: Importantly, many of them appeared to overcome L2 anxiety and were very confident when speaking in front of a large group. Many of those who had been too shy to speak before appeared to be more comfortable and enthusiastic about speaking.

Enhancing comprehension: It was also easier for them to understand what their partners or other classmates shared as they had a certain level of understanding about the general idea of the topic while searching and doing out-of-class listening work.

Providing more accurate grammar and enhancing vocabulary range: The participants also showed that they used a variety of academic vocabulary, complicated phrases, and advanced grammar structures in small discussions or when making a presentation.

4.2.2. Findings from the interviews

The data from the interviews also revealed some benefits of listening portfolios to learners' speaking performances regarding learner-centeredness and productivity.

Learner-centered: All of the interviewees agreed that the classroom time was indeed learner-centered when all of the time students had to work and perform tasks given by the teacher.

More productive: Many learners commented that they gained more knowledge about a prompted topic as well as acquiring more academic vocabulary in that topic, so they were more eager to participate in discussion activities and more ready to share their ideas with their classmates about what they knew.

5. Conclusion

Listening is seen to be an effective strategy to scaffold academic language and knowledge for speaking. However, the important point is that students are asked to make listening portfolios at home rather than in class. By using outside-classroom listening portfolio before inside-classroom speaking tasks, teachers allow students to accumulate more knowledge or information on a particular topic, better organize their thoughts, and ultimately lower their L2 speaking anxiety. The study findings indicated that academic speaking following prepared listening outside the classroom were more time-saving and engaging, with students using more accurate grammar and more precise vocabulary when they spoke. The study suggests that to apply flipped learning model more effectively in language classrooms, it is necessary to adapt it to a particular teaching and learning context. In skill-integration teaching, flipped learning can be understood that using the outside-classroom time to enhance knowledge through a receptive skill and prepare for another productive skill in the classroom time. In this study, listening portfolios significantly enhance inside-classroom speaking task engagement as well as performances.

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LỚP HỌC ĐẢO NGƯỢC: SỬ DỤNG TẬP BÀI NGHE NGOÀI LỚP HỌC ĐỂ TĂNG CƯỜNG HIỆU QUẢ HOẠT ĐỘNG NÓI TRÊN LỚP

Tóm tắt: Với thời lượng giảng dạy hạn hẹp trong lớp học, nhiều giáo viên ngoại ngữ tiếng Anh đã gặp nhiều trở ngại trong việc làm thế nào để tạo ra được nhiều không gian, thời gian và cơ hội hơn cho người học sử dụng ngôn ngữ đích một cách ý nghĩa. Thông qua phương pháp định tính với các cách tiếp cận như phỏng vấn, phân tích tài liệu học tập và quan sát lớp học, bài nghiên cứu tìm hiểu hiệu quả của việc ứng dụng mô hình lớp học đảo ngược với sự tích hợp giữa hai kỹ năng nghe và nói. Khách thể tham gia của đề tài là 17 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh đang tham gia vào khoá học nghe-nói 6 tại Khoa Ngoại Ngữ trường Đại học Quảng Bình. Kết quả nghiên cứu đã cho thấy rằng kỹ năng nghe của người học đã phát triển đáng kể, sinh viên tự tin hơn và tham gia vào các hoạt động nói hiệu quả hơn khi được chuẩn bị về chủ đề đó thông qua kỹ năng nghe ở nhà. Bài báo đề xuất rằng để tăng cường tính tự học của người học và tối đa hoá hiệu quả trong thời gian lớp học, việc áp dụng mô hình đảo ngược như bài tập ở nhà làm việc tại lớp và công việc tại lớp chuẩn bị ở nhà với sự kết hợp của các kỹ năng khác nhau đóng vai trò quan trọng trong việc giảng dạy ngoại ngữ.

Từ khoá: Học đảo ngược, tập bài nghe, tích hợp kỹ năng nghe và nói