

The Implications of Using a Flipped Classroom Model on Adult EFL Learners' Speaking Skills: A Literature Review

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Abstract: In the digital age, the flipped classroom model has become a hot topic in education, and more and more language classrooms are introducing it. Through a systematic literature review, this paper analyzes the internal and external implications of FCM on the speaking skills of EFL learners, looking forward to providing guidance for language teachers and digital technology researchers.

Keywords: Flipped classroom model;Adult EFL class;Speaking skills

1. Introduction

English is the most widely used language in the world and more and more non-native English speakers are learning it. For language learners, speaking skills are crucial and determine whether learners can apply the language to communicate in real-life contexts. With the Covid-19 pandemic and emerging technological developments, more and more adult English as foreign language (EFL) classes are introducing the Flipped Classroom Model (FCM) expecting to improve adults' speaking skills. The flipped classroom model, also known as the classroom reversal, is now a hot topic. However, this research question is what are the implications of using a flipped classroom model on adult EFL learners' speaking skills?

This paper provides a synthesis review of the literature related to FCM on adults' EFL speaking skills, looking to analyze the current state of research and trends through an overview of existing studies. The remainder of the paper is organized according to the justification, grouped reviews of individual studies, and conclusions.

2. Justification

Firstly, a systematic literature search was conducted on databases subscribed from the Johns Hopkins University Library. Two keywords were used: “flipped” and “EFL speaking”, and the search showed 17 relevant papers. Further literature selection and review of titles and abstracts identified studies for adults, where universities could be included and excluded relevant studies such as primary and secondary schools. The result was nine pieces of literature included in the review.

Next, an advanced search on Google Scholar using two keywords, “flipped classroom model” and “EFL speaking skills”, retrieved 58 articles of relevant literature. Further literature selection was conducted to review titles and abstracts, identify studies with adults, examine by hand for relevance to the research topic, and include six pieces of literature in the review. Thus, a total of 15 papers are included in the review of this paper.

3. Individual Studies

Following the final full-text review of the 15 articles, all 15 articles proposed that the flipped classroom model had a positive impact on adult EFL learners' speaking skills. For the implications of speaking skills, these articles can be divided into two groups, external and internal implications.

3.1 External Implications

Harris (1974) proposed that speaking skills have five elements, including comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Four of the fifteen articles focus on the external effects of FCM on adult EFL learners' speaking skills, including

comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and body language. Wang and Wright (2018) proposed that students in the FCM learning group significantly outperformed the standard group in speaking fluency, but the advantages in complexity and accuracy were not significant. However, Köroğlu and Çakır (2017), argue that students showed significant improvements in fluency, coherence, vocabulary resources, grammar, pronunciation, and accuracy after using the FCM, reference to the IELTS Speaking Scale for students at Turkish state universities. In addition, a more significant finding, Bezzazi (2019) found that learners in the flipped group significantly outperformed the standard group in body language and content organization, as measured by a study of 79 second-year students in Taiwan using both quantitative and qualitative methods, based on presentations and reflective essays on before and after class. Furthermore, it is interesting to state that the use of flipped classrooms helps to improve the speaking skills of female students significantly more than male students and that such results can be attributed to women's ability to express their emotions (Aburezeq, 2020).

3.2 Internal Implications

Eleven of the fifteen studies focused on the internal implications of FCM on adults' EFL speaking skills, including the positive impact of the FCM model on speaking skills by increasing engagement, enhancing critical thinking, and reducing anxiety in speaking learning.

3.2.1 Increased Engagement

Many scholars propose that the FCM model can enhance adult EFL learners' engagement in the speaking classes, and result in improved speaking skills. Yesilçinar (2019) proposed that FCM improved adult EFL learners' speaking skills while significantly increasing learners' classroom engagement by using a method of collecting speaking scales, classroom observations by the teacher, questionnaires, and structured focus groups with 22 learners from the Turkish State University. Further, the FCM model was able to significantly increase learner engagement in the classroom through various forms of presentations, discussions, and debates within the classroom (Khalil and Fahim, 2016). Teng (2018) agreed that FCM enhances student engagement, pointing out that because FCM focuses on a student-centered method, it allows more time for students to participate in the classroom and provides space for communicative activities and interaction, thus improving students' speaking skills.

FCM has been shown to increase the engagement of adult EFL learners in the speaking classroom, however, it requires ensuring that class sizes are not too large. Sainan (2016) argued that only class sizes are small to ensure personalized instruction with opportunities for students to engage and that if class sizes are too large the FCM model has the same effect as a traditional classroom.

3.2.2 Reduced Anxiety

Some research shows that EFL can reduce the anxiety of adult EFL learners, giving them more confidence to improve their speaking skills. The best way to improve learners' English speaking skills is to create a friendly and collaborative environment that enables learners to reduce their anxiety and increase their self-confidence (Leong et al., 2016). Abdullah et al. (2021), based on 27 undergraduate students from Buraimi University College in the Sultanate, discovered significant improvements in learners' English language skills along with significant improvements in anxiety using the FCM's pre-, mid-, and post-stage anxiety questionnaire, focus group interviews and student reflective journals. Interestingly, their willingness to speak English also increased over time (Abdullah et al., 2021).

Further, Qinghua and Jiabei (2016), targeting 16 first-year undergraduate students at Sulanari University of Technology, proposed that FCM allowed learners to learn better on their own and better prepare for classroom activities in advance, thus improving learners' confidence and reducing anxiety through pre-test and post-test. However, he also argued that the introduction of FCM had led to a serious polarization of the class, with students at the bottom of the scale not being adequately prepared and therefore more anxious and less confident in participating in the activities (Qinghua and Jiabei, 2016).

3.2.3 Enhanced Critical Thinking

Some studies have shown that FCM enhances critical thinking and so enhances the speaking skills of adult EFL learners. Correa (2015) proposes that FCM is a good way for students to begin to think critically and that it will greatly enhance learners' critical thinking and ultimately improve their speaking skills compared to traditional educational models. Further, Chen and Hwang (2020), also agreed that FCM can significantly improve the academic performance and critical thinking awareness of adult EFL students and encourage independent thinking and develop critical awareness and suggested that concept mapping-based FCM strategies can be used.

Also, Sainan (2016), by conducting a study with 152 second-year undergraduate students in Taiwan, using questionnaires and interviews, agrees that the FCM model enhances students' critical thinking and helps to improve learners' English speaking skills and points out that because it satisfies the need for personalized learning for adult EFL learners. However, he argued that there are still

great challenges in implementing FCM in the teaching of speaking English at university. This is because there are still some students who cannot learn autonomously and have difficulties learning without the monitoring of teachers (Sainan, 2016).

4. Conclusions

Overall, a systematic review of the 15 articles revealed that, firstly, all 15 articles consistently showed a positive effect of FCM on adult EFL learners' speaking skills. Four of the 15 articles focused on the external effects on EFL learners' speaking skills, including comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and body language. Eleven articles focused on the internal effects on EFL learners' speaking skills, including increased engagement, reduced anxiety, and improved critical thinking. These are presented in Figures 1 and Figures 2. The literature review provides a framework for the implications of FCM for adult EFL learners' speaking skills from both external and internal perspectives.

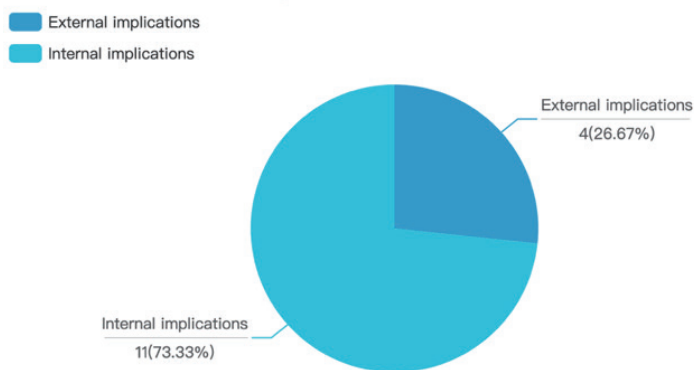


Figure 1 The implication of using FCM on adult EFL learners' speaking skills

External implications	Internal implications
Improve fluency, coherence, vocabulary resources, grammar, pronunciation and accuracy	Increased engagement
	Reduced anxiety
Improved body language and content organization	Enhanced critical thinking

Figure 2 Summary of detailed impacts

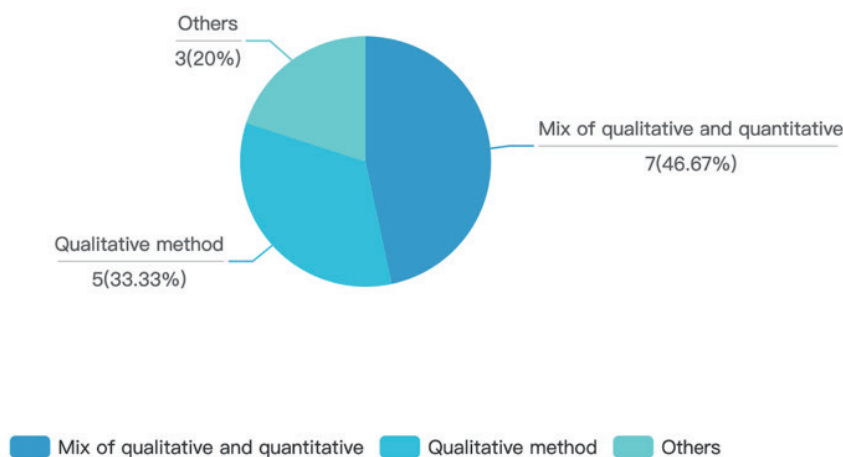


Figure 3 Research methods

In addition, to the study method, seven of the 15 articles used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, and five used a qualitative method (presented in Figure 3). The methods used to collect data included, pre- and post-class tests on speaking skills, classroom observations, questionnaires, semi-structured focus group interviews, and students writing reflective journals.

However, although the FCM model has a positive impact on adult EFL learners' speaking skills, there are still some challenges to implementing a flipped classroom. By reviewing 15 pieces of literature, some suggestions are offered for teachers of speaking in adult EFL classrooms. Firstly, using FCM in the EFL speaking classroom, teachers should increase their monitoring and management of students. Secondly, ensure that classes are small so that only in this way can individualized instruction be provided for students. Thirdly, the teacher should provide technical support for the students when necessary to ensure that they have no technical problems. Last but not least, the teacher needs to update and evaluate the learning materials and videos provided to ensure they are high quality.

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