

THE IMPACT OF BLENDED LEARNING ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY AND LEARNING MOTIVATION AT DONG NAI TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effects of blended learning on students' speaking ability, students' learning motivation at Dong Nai Technology University. In this study, the pre- and post-speaking tests and students' learning motivation questionnaires were used to collect the quantitative data with 60 students randomly participation. The research results revealed that blended learning instruction helped improve students' speaking ability. Furthermore, the results indicated that students' learning motivation was at a high level. The research results, therefore, conclusively proves that blended learning implementation is effective in improving students' speaking ability and in attaining a high level of students' learning motivation.

Keywords: blended learning, combined learning efficiency, impact of blended learning

1. Introduction

When covid -19 came to the planet, online learning was the best way to transfer knowledge and became the hot trend of teaching methods in approaching education 4.0 in Vietnam, especially in higher education. Dong Nai Technology University has applied blended learning since 2018 with combined teaching method, 70% of offline classes (traditional teaching methods), and 30% of online classes (E-learning). Therefore, finding the impact of blended learning on students' speaking ability and learning motivation factors is important to improve teaching approaches of blended learning.

2. Research questions

1. How effective is blended learning in improving students' speaking ability at DNTU?
2. How does blended learning affect students' learning motivation?

3. Literature review

3.1 Speaking skill

According to Chaney (1988, p.13), speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts.

Scott (1978, p.18) identified that "speaking can be typified as an activity involving two or more people in which the participants are both hearers and speakers having to react to what they hear and make their contribution." The hearers and listeners are required to reflect on the information that they have heard and contribute with their ideas.

In 1976, Byrne (p.8) claimed that speaking is a two-way process between the speaker(s) and the listener(s) involving the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding. In the two-way process, speaking requires the speaker(s) to have the productive skills to encode the message and the listener(s) to have receptive skills to decode the message.

Brown (1983) also stated that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. Speaking skill is defined as "the range of exercise types and activities with a communication approach is unlimited, provided that such exercises and activities enable learners to attain the communicative objectives of the curriculum, engage learners in communication and require the use of such communicative processes as information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction". (Richard and Rodgers, 1986: 165).

To summarize, different researchers have different definitions of the word “speaking”, however, they all agree on one very important feature of speaking. Speaking is one of the most important skills of all the four language skills because individuals who learn a language are referred to as the speakers of that language (Ur, 1996).

3.2 Blended learning

Blended learning is originally used to describe subjects that tried to combine face-to-face learning with online learning. Blended learning and hybrid learning are two more phrases that are frequently used in conjunction with blended learning. The terms "blending," "mixing," and "combination of learning" all have the same meaning. A program for a specific audience is The Effect of Blended Learning on Learning Motivation and Learning Outcomes. The term "blended" refers to the addition of additional electronic forms to traditional instructor-led instruction. Blended learning programs, as defined in this book, use a variety of e-learning formats, instructor-led training and other live formats can be added to the mix.

Combines aspects of Blended learning (electronic format) such as web-based learning, video streaming, synchronous and asynchronous audio communication with traditional “face-to-face” learning.

In the mixed learning technique, there’re two methods, each with its own set of benefits and drawbacks (Pikiran, Liando & Wuntu, 2021)

The concept of blended learning has been around for a long time, but its terminology was not firmly established until around the beginning of the 21st century. Graham (2006) defined “blended learning systems” as learning systems that “combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction.” Poon (2013: 1) adds that the aim of the two delivery methods is to complement each other.

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

In order to collect the data for the study, 60 students were randomly chosen to take participation in the study. Most of the students are second-year students who have just finished A1 level in English and going to move up to A2 level. They are non-English majors. This module lasts 8 weeks with 45 periods, 6 periods each week, and 40 minutes each period.

4.2 Research design

Basing on Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, p.564), the research was carried out and the following figure illustrated an action research's cycles that the authors used in the study.

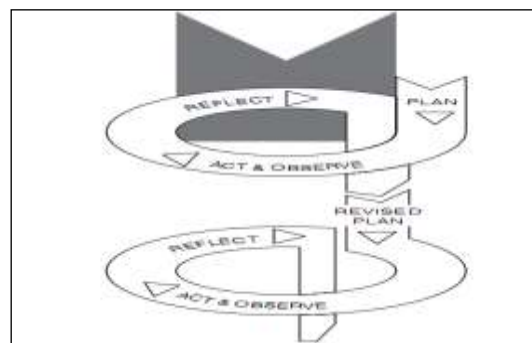


Figure 1: Kemmis and McTaggart's action research spiral According to these authors, each action research cycle should involve:

- planning a change;
- acting and observing the process and consequences of the change;
- Reflecting on these processes and consequences and then replanning for the next cycle.

4.3 Data collection instruments

In order to collect information about the students' motivation during speaking lessons and their speaking proficiency, the researchers used two survey questionnaires, classroom observation, and three tests (a pre-test and two post-tests).

4.4 Data analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data was used in the study. Quantitative data were gathered from the two tests and the two survey questionnaires, while the qualitative data was obtained from the classroom observation. For the results of the tests and the survey questionnaires, the percentage was calculated. For the class observation, the researcher noted down the information carefully and evaluated the level of the student's motivation in the observation sheet in each speaking lesson.

5. Results and discussion

5.1 Data from the tests

5.1.1 Pre-test results

The pre-test is taken from the oral final test of the last course. And before implementing the action, the results were used to measure students’ English proficiency and shown in the following table.

GPA	Letter grade	Number of Students	Percentage %
9,0 – 10	A+	0	0
8,5 - 8,9	A	2	3,3
8,0 - 8,4	B+	3	5
7,0 - 7,9	B	15	25
6,5 - 6,9	C+	19	31,7
5,5 - 6,4	C	13	21,7
5,0 - 5,4	D+	6	10
4,0 - 4,9	D	2	3,3
< 4	F	0	0

Table 1: General results of pre-test

5.1.2. Results of Post-test 1

A Post-test 1 was carried out after three weeks of implementing the action to understand about the changes in students' speaking proficiency. The following table will show the results of the Post-test 1.

GPA	Letter grade	Number of Students	Percentage %
9,0 – 10	A+	0	0
8,5 - 8,9	A	2	3,3
8,0 - 8,4	B+	4	6,7
7,0 - 7,9	B	19	31,7
6,5 - 6,9	C+	18	30
5,5 - 6,4	C	13	21,7
5,0 - 5,4	D+	3	5
4,0 - 4,9	D	1	1,7
< 4	F	0	0

Table 2: General results of Post-test 1

5.1.3. Results of Post-test 2 After conducting the Post-test 1 and considering the reflection of the students, the researcher decided to do cycles 2 with the Post-test 2. The results of the Post-test 2 were shown in the following table.

GPA	Letter grade	Number of Students	Percentage %
9,0 – 10	A+	1	1,7
8,5 - 8,9	A	4	6,7
8,0 - 8,4	B+	7	11,7
7,0 - 7,9	B	18	30
6,5 - 6,9	C+	18	30
5,5 - 6,4	C	11	18,3
5,0 - 5,4	D+	1	1,7
4,0 - 4,9	D	0	0
< 4	F	0	0

5.2.2. Students' feedback about blended learning in order to know the students' attitudes after participating in speaking lessons with blended learning, the following table indicates students' feedback about blended learning.

No.	Opinions	Cycle 1					Cycle 2				
		No. of Students									
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	Blended learning lessons encourage students to be active in finding documents	0	18	33	8	1	5	23	32	0	0
2	The blended learning lessons help the students understand the subject better.	0	18	27	15	0	5	23	32	0	0
3	Blended learning motivates the students to study by themselves.	0	14	42	4	0	3	22	35	0	0
4	The lessons with blended learning method are more interesting.	4	18	32	6	0	5	23	32	0	0

Table 3: Overall mark of Post-test 2

To sum up, after 8 weeks applying the blended learning in teaching and learning speaking lessons, the researcher found that the number of students at every level gradually increased. For Pre-test and Post-test 1, there was no one getting A+, but there was one student achieving the level at Post-test 2. The good numbers went up from pre-test to post-test at the level of mark B, B+, and A. From the tables, the researcher saw that the number of students gradually went down from pre-test to post-test at the level of mark C+, C, D+, and D. These are good signals of applying blended learning in speaking lessons.

5.2. Data from the questionnaire

5.2.1. Level of interest in learning speaking lessons with blended learning

In the table below, the students' levels of motivation was clearly indicated.

Level of interest in learning speaking lessons with blended learning	Preliminary	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
	Number of students		
Highly interested	8 (13%)	8 (13%)	13 (22%)
Very interested	13 (22%)	13 (22%)	17 (28%)
Interested	18 (30%)	22 (37%)	23 (38%)
Uninterested	21 (35%)	17 (28%)	7 (12%)

Table 4. Students' level of interest in learning speaking lessons Overall, table 4 provides clear information about level of interest in learning speaking lessons. The percentage of students highly interested was same between preliminary and cycle 1 (13% means 8 students), but cycle 2 was 22% (13 students). The next group is the very interested student group, the number of students in cycle 1 was the same as the original (at beginning action) with 22% (13 students), but in the cycle 2 was 28% (17 students). It is noting that the third group is the highest number of students, with 37% (about 22 students) in cycle 1 and 38% (23 students) in cycle 2. The number of students feel uninterested in cycle 2 significantly reduced from 28% (cycle 1) to 12%

5	The student's learning experience is enhanced by blended learning lessons	3	12	37	8	0	4	22	34	0	0
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Table 5. Students' comments on discussion activities (1: highly agree, 2: agree, 3: neutral; 4: disagree, 5: strongly disagree)

The table 5 indicated the level of the students' motivation from the first week to the last week of implementing the action.

Overall, the survey results confirmed that Blended learning had a positive impact on students and improved speaking skill for learners.

6. Conclusion

Blended learning is an inevitable trend in the future with duration or proportion of learning in online classes with the prediction that it will be more than offline learning class. Therefore, the evaluation of student learning activities plays an important role in blended learning. And it is necessary to evaluate the impact of blended learning in improving skills in learning foreign languages.

The findings of the study reveal that with bleaded learning in speaking lessons could help increase motivation of almost of the students in the classes and their speaking skill.

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