Blended Learning Model Implementation ON THE Teaching OF English Speaking Skills IN Post Pandemic Covid-19 Time: Challenge AND Opportunities

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Abstract

Currently, the world is having problems with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Educators should continue to maintain the teaching and learning process and the Speaking skills course at the English Department study program by implementing Blended teaching and learning models. This study aims to describe the challenges and opportunities of implementing the blended learning Model on teaching English speaking skills in the post-pandemic covid-19 pandemic at higher education based on lecturers' perceptions. This research applied a qualitative study. The method used in this research is a descriptive quantitative research method, where the researcher as a key instrument acts as a participant-observer in collecting data in the field. The results of this study found that the lecturer of the speaking skills course experienced several challenges in teaching this subject, namely: financial limitations and adequate learning tools; Network and quota problems; Limitations of Digital Literacy for both lecturers and students; Student Laziness doing tasks independently; Lack of direct practice with Verbal languages; Time limitations in correcting students work and student assignment evaluation methods; consuming a lot times in Teaching Preparation. In addition, this study also found that there were several good opportunities obtained by the lecturer of the speaking skills course during the new standard era post-pandemic covid-19 time as follows: The material used was authentic material which was mostly taken from YouTube channel; increased student performance; increased self-confidence; students gain recognition from viewers and subscribers; students and lecturers are becoming more creative and innovative; flexible learning time and not limited by time and space; Students' vocabulary increases; and increasing knowledge of digital literacy, both lecturers and students. Based on these findings, the implications of this research are the increase in digital literacy of lecturers and students and the application of blended learning in the pursuit of speaking skills by applying appropriate teaching and learning technology.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has ushered in a new era of normalcy, resulting in dramatic changes in people's habits and lifestyles across the board. That process is a significant issue for all educators, policymakers, parents, and even students. When the covid-19 pandemic first appeared, human life and activities outside the home were severely restricted to disrupt the virus's chain of transmission. However, as time passes, humans begin to learn that life must go on even in the midst of a pandemic. Humans then consider and attempt to rewind the wheel of their existence by learning to be "friendly" with the covid-19. Online learning, of course, necessitates the ability to employ technology to facilitate the virtual application of education. Blended learning activities are one of the solutions to education in the new normal era.

Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning, is a combination of web technology-based learning and classroom learning to achieve educational goals. It is a type of learning that blends two forms of learning, namely face-to-face and online learning. Speaking courses that use online or mixed learning face a variety of obstacles during the learning process. The fact that under this New Normal, face-to-face learning is becoming less common and more focused on blended learning is creating new problems and opportunities for speaking lecturers as well as students in English education programs. Based on the foregoing, the purpose of this study is to discuss the challenges and opportunities of teaching Speaking skills in the New Normal Era at Christian University of Indonesia Toraja's faculty of English teacher training and education. If this activity is carried out face to face by educators, it will be thoroughly supervised and evaluated (Harmer, 2012).

Literature Review

Speaking Skills

Speaking is one of the language abilities that has come to be used as a general indicator of a person's capacity to communicate in English. Speaking is a "productive ability, which consists of making structured verbal utterances to transmit meaning; and an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing speech sound," according to Bailey and Brown in Ngadiso (Ngadiso, 2016) Teaching Speaking entails various activities that encourage students to apply the language they've acquired as a means of communication in their daily lives, both formally and informally. Some of these exercises are conducted face to face for students to practice and use the language actively.

According to Harmer, there are various reasons why educators utilize certain activities in the classroom, including the fact that teachers use certain activities so that students can discuss and try to use the language they already know. Retrieval and application, communication speaking activities, and practising activities are all examples of activities. Students are assisted in remembering the language they are learning through this practice, helping them desire to speak and utilize the language they are learning. It is also critical to provide opportunities for students to be exposed to the language and utilize it as a medium of communication; nevertheless, most teachers are solely concerned with their classroom instruction, as stated by Panggua in Robertson, (2005). Harmer went on to say that there are numerous ways for learners to train and practice the language they have learned, including interviews, debates, storytelling, simulations, and roleplaying. If done face-to-face, this activity will be closely watched and evaluated by educators. (Harmer, 2012)

Teaching Speaking Skills in the New Normal Era

Speaking abilities necessitate more direct practice by students and teachers, which teachers almost always initiate. As stated by Harmer, teachers or lecturers must provide training opportunities and tasks to their students to actively use the language they are learning. The most important aspect of speaking learning is that there must be a task in the form of an oral task that learners must want to complete (Harmer, 2012).

Harmer remarked that there are three solid motivations for learners to undertake oral activities in the speaking task, all of which motivate them to use the language they are learning: rehearsal (exercise), feedback, and engagement. During the Covid-19 period, the teaching of speaking skills underwent significant changes, with students being required to take oral tests, receive feedback from educators or study partners, and suddenly being required to learn more online or through a blended learning model. As we know, learners are unable to participate in live training and receive feedback from classmates and educators.

Teachers and lecturers can teach speaking skills using various methods and approaches, such as communicative language instruction (CLT), role play, information gab, storytelling, interview, survey, discussion, and debate. Educators frequently employ all of these tactics and approaches while teaching students to communicate. However, these methodologies and tactics cannot be used efficiently in the new normal era post-pandemic the covid-19. Today's educational methodologies and approaches necessitate the usage of internet-connected computer software technology. Multimedia EFL teaching was the overall concept (Alghaberi, 2019).There is a variety of language learning software that is creative and generally accessible to professors or lecturers from various parts of the world in this period. According to Liu as cited by Alghaberi, the goal of employing the program is to support and limit students' active participation in learning, particularly their English speaking skills (Alghaberi, 2019).

Speaking Skills Teaching Challenges in the New Normal Era

In the field of education, the post-apocalyptic period, often known as the New Normal, has various implications and obstacles. Cahapay explains the difficulty of teaching in the new normal period in the following way: a) Curriculum content, whether curriculum content will be integrated or reduced; c) Learning approaches that largely shift to online modalities should be considered taking into account a variety of factors; d) Curriculum content, whether curriculum content will be integrated or reduced; e) Curriculum content, whether curriculum content will be integrated or reduced; f) Curriculum content, whether curriculum content will be integrated or reduced; g) Curriculum content, whether curriculum content will be integrated or reduced; d) In terms of instructional evaluation, some of the focus on learning assessments serves as a reassuring reminder for instructors (Cahapay, 2020).

Other issues raised by some researchers include: a) face-to-face learning and practice become limited; b) digitalization greatly affects classroom culture and confuses learners; c) excessive information causes anxiety and reduces performance; multitasking promoted by social media negatively affects concentration; and d) excessive information causes anxiety and reduces performance. Online learning can cause a variety of health issues, including computer fatigue, back and wrist discomfort, short attention spans, and neurological systems. Still, it also provides a holistic, mentally and physically demanding learning experience (Ginsburg, Sabatini, & Wagner, 2000) and (Walter, 2013). Before this tremendous pandemic, teachers of English faced some challenges, including their professional competence moreover, they tend to rank themselves highly in the "textbook skills" rather than in "communicative areas (Panggua, Wello, Jabu, & Macdonald, 2017).

Speaking Skills Teaching Opportunities in the New Normal Era

A side from the difficulties of learning to speak in the New Normal Era, there are some beneficial possibilities to be had during the learning process, as follows:

Location and study space

According to Wildemeersch & Jütte (2017), spaces and places of learning were primarily concentrated in traditional educational institutions such as schools and adult learning centres decades ago. Still, digital transformation opened up all-new spaces and places of education and learning during the New Normal era. In informal learning, smartphones (mobile learning), tablets, and other applications are primary media. The traditional distinctions between official, non-formal, and informal education are blurring in this new normal. Knowledge and

information are now freely accessible over the internet, with Wikipedia serving as the most well-known example (Hartung, 2017). It was decided to construct a temporary online learning platform. According to Pierre Walter (Walter, 2013), new computer programs, learning platforms, web-based training modules, customized search engines, web-based surveys, and reference and assessment tools are constantly being developed.

Digital Literacy

Online and blended learning give learning opportunities to be accessed at any time and from any location, without regard for space or time constraints. Learners can thus access a wider range of knowledge and get a higher depth of understanding without relying on lecturers. Teachers or lecturers are no longer required to plan all of the activities in the classroom; instead, lecturers might serve as facilitators who question, encourage, assist, and challenge students. Learners are more in charge of their own education and take more responsibility for it (Ginsberg, et al., 2000). Furthermore, learners develop personal knowledge, and learning networks through selective connections with others, and information and communication technology (ICT) is used to promote connections/networks: between one learner and another, between learners and tutors, and between the learning community and its learning resources (Jones, 2015).

Management of Knowledge

Not only is knowledge changing rapidly due to new research results, new development, and the rapid dissemination of ideas and practices on the internet with online learning and/or blended learning. However, sources of information that are broadly related to real variability of information validity are also proliferating. That is due to the Bates (2015) Board of Canada conference on the competencies expected in public knowledge. It becomes an opportunity for educators to handle new knowledge and information gathered when a lot of new knowledge, ideas, practices, and information varies.

Social Media Communication skills

Another advantage of online learning is social media communication skills, which Bates (2015) defines as "the ability to make short videos on YouTube videos; the ability to reach a wider community through the internet; acquire and combine feedback; appropriately share information; and identify trends and ideas from various sources." Lecturers can use these skills to help students improve their speaking abilities. Students, in particular, can access many instances of communication and films by native speakers and then create videos, post, and distribute them to YouTube channels, where they can receive comments from their friends or other viewers.

Ability to learn independently

In the new normal era, digital learning can also allow students to learn more independently. With fewer social events and more direct interaction with peers, children will learn more independently and not rely on friends, instead of learning to study independently. According to Bates (2015), that skill will make pupils responsible for learning and finding the knowledge they require. That could be related to new learning equipment, new ways of doing things, or learning how to locate the people they require to assist them in obtaining what they require.

Thinking Skills

Another advantage of studying in the new normal period is the development of thinking skills. In author Bates (2015) state such as uses critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, and strategy as thinking skills. This skill can be gained through spoken learning, in

which lecturers encourage students to build critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, creativity, originality, and ways of talking virtually in English with lecturers and fellow students.

Digital Skills

Learning in the new normal era is mostly done online or in combination with face-to-face and online (blended). It necessitates knowledge-based activities and activities that are heavily reliant on technology. However, Bates (2015) suggests that the usage of digital technology should be integrated through the evaluation of lecturers' basic knowledge and courses.

Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative research techniques. Researchers, in that case, would like to learn more about the challenges and opportunities faced by English education study program lecturers when teaching speaking skills courses, particularly in the New Normal Era of the covid-19 pandemic. Three instructors from UKI Toraja's English education study program who teach the Speaking course took part in this study. Participants in this study were chosen with care; those actively teaching in speaking subjects in the new normal are seen to be a good source of information. In this study, interviews were used as a data collection method. This interview aims to gather information from the three lecturers who took part in the study. The researcher, who also serves as a participant-observer, is the primary instrument in this study. That data is gathered in a natural setting by conducting direct interviews with lecturers who are participants in the study and supplemented by various supporting papers. Researchers employed the interactive model or interactive model Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2014) to analyze the data from this study interview. According to Sugiyono, the activity in qualitative analysis approaches consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drafting/verification.

Results And Discussion

The results of this study are explained in this section, such as how to teach speaking skills in the new normal era in English education programs; what are the challenges and opportunities for lecturers in teaching speaking skills in the New Normal Era; and what are the challenges and opportunities for lecturers in teaching speaking skills in the New Normal Era. The information for this study was gathered through a virtual structured interview with three professors from English education programs that focus on effective speaking abilities. The first and second lecturers teach speaking for general communication courses in separate parallel classes, while the second lecturer teaches speaking for professional context courses.

Teaching Speaking Skills in the New Normal Era in English education programs

Speaking skills are divided into four courses in English education programs for the academic year 2019/2020, namely speaking for general communication 1 and 2, speaking for professional context, and speaking for academic reasons, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1:
Speaking Skills Course

Courses	Semester
Speaking for general communication 1	I
Speaking for general communication 2	II
Speaking for Professional Context	III
Speaking for Academic Purposes	IV

Based on the findings of many interviews with three effective lecturers in speaking skills, it can

be determined that the teaching of speaking skills in the new normal period is considerably different from prior face-to-face sessions. More learning occurs electronically in this new normal era, thanks to apps like Google Meet, Zoom, and WhatsApp. According to all instructors, Blended learning consists of 70% virtual learning and 30% face-to-face learning. Because of more excellent virtual learning, speaking skills that should be practiced in the classroom and with peers are reduced. Lecturers who offer courses on general communication 1 to new students, in particular, ensure that there is a practice of conversing in class with classmates, although less intensively, given that students must still wear masks and maintain a safe distance, and some students are particularly concerned. Lecturers also explained that students in the new normal required them to think hard about learning methods and strategies and choosing and using the appropriate media. According to Harmer (Harmer, 2012), speaking learning tactics include interviews, discussions, storytelling, simulations, and roleplaying, all of which are more successful when done directly. Students are offered more learning materials in the form of authentic learning from the YouTube channel. Students are often given a week to study alone at home with the assistance of competent English speakers, and after that, they create their videos explaining what they have learned and re-upload them on their own YouTube channel. Every week, an assignment becomes one of the lecturers' research packets, allowing students to improve their speaking skills. The UKI Toraja e-campuz portal was used to send and report the student's assignment.

Speaking Skills Teaching Opportunities in the New Normal Era

According to the findings of interviews with lecturers in the English Education Study Program who study speaking skills, there are numerous potential that they perceive in the virtual or blended learning process. These possibilities are listed below, one by one:

Authentic Material

The learning content used is actual YouTube instructional material that students can access and play repeatedly and from any location. The lecturer selected authentic material following the theme stated in the curriculum and predefined learning in the Lesson Plan. Students are given assignments to listen to and practice their speaking skills whenever and wherever they like, according to the deadlines set by professors for studying and completing tasks.

Student Performance Improvement in Speaking skills

The performance will be due to activities. That required students to create videos and explore them on YouTube. The video they create provides an example of a lecturer's pronunciation at each phase and an assessment tool for students and lecturers. Students will gain experience in practicing their hearing by watching native speakers, which will impact their pronunciation becoming more native-like.

Flexible Study Time

Because the assignment is completed from home, students have more flexibility in their study time. They have a set amount of time to study and complete the assignments. Students who have networking issues will be able to learn individually and assess and improve their video performance before publishing it to their YouTube account. Students have a chance to succeed. With this flexible study time, students can adjust to the optimal time and learning style for maximum performance results.

Creative and Innovative

Almost every professor assigns students to prepare a video performance in speaking skills based on the learning theme for that week. This motivates students to complete the learning

taxonomy, precisely level creation. Because they must post their performance videos on their YouTube channel, students become more creative in making and refining them. The uploading of their video performance further increases the level of difficulty for students. Students receive rewards and recognition from the public on their YouTube channel by receiving likes, subscribes, and comments from their followers.

Student vocabulary develops

Lecturers claim that weekly tasks involving watching and listening to videos by native speakers help students improve their vocabulary. If the vocabulary can then be developed through use in everyday speech, it will positively impact the students' capacity to communicate. e. Students' self-assurance grows. Students who pay attention in class and complete their weekly assignments have more self-confidence. Students' confidence in speaking skills will be boosted by creating each video once a week.

Recognition from viewers

Students will receive acknowledgment and feedback in the form of viewer or subscriber comments, as well as an evaluation based on the feedback.

Digital literacy

Lecturers and students must employ technology platforms and applications with an Internet connection in the New Normal Era. Students' technological talents are then developed due to lecturers' utilization of various learning platforms and applications. As Alghaberi (Alghaberi, 2019)) explains, in the digital world, learning demands educators to adopt methods and approaches that involve internet-connected computer software technology known as Multimedia EFL teaching. According to theory and opinion, education will have a significant impact on the selection and usage of various technologies. From a technical standpoint, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define or categorize technology because it is evolving so quickly and because technology has a wide range of features and capabilities that vary depending on the environment in which it is used. It would be a mistake from a practical standpoint if teachers simply concentrated on the properties of instructional technology. There are other social, organizational, financial, and accessibility considerations to consider.
As well as strong scientific evidence or rigorous theory, the selection and use of technology for teaching and learning is influenced by context, values, and beliefs. As a result, there will be no single frame or 'best' model. On the other hand, educators are open to technological determinism, including a total rejection of technology for teaching, unless there are numerous models to guide its selection and usage, given the continually expanding spectrum of technology (Bates, 2015). Given that learning in this new normal era necessitates the use of online multimedia technology, it is necessary to provide structural development support and training for lecturers (Olivier, 2020) so that teachers can become more masterful in the use of multimedia, particularly in the learning of speaking skills.

Speaking Skills Learning Challenges in the New Normal Era

In addition to the excellent opportunities for teaching speaking skills in the New Normal Era, there are also some instructional problems and challenges, as indicated below:

a.   Financial barriers and lack of appropriate learning aids. Some students expressed dissatisfaction with the high costs of smartphones, laptops, and other learning devices.
b.   Issues with the network and quotas. Some students complain to lecturers that they are unable to finish and submit their assignments on time due to poor internet access at their camps or dormitories. Students have also expressed dissatisfaction with the freedom of internet quotas. Despite the government providing learning quota aid to students, teachers, and lecturers every month.

c.   Digital literacy limitations for both lecturers and students. This hand is intended for students who are unfamiliar with online learning applications. Lecturers face difficulties in selecting and implementing information technology that is appropriate for the learning material and theme.

d.   Student indulgence performing independent tasks. Lecturers and students lose control of their discipline when they spend more time at home. According to the three instructors who took part in this study, some students did not complete the work due to laziness, which is more prevalent when they are not at home.

e.   Lack of direct experience with verbal communication. Because 70% of learning is virtual, the direct practice of speaking skills is severely constrained and can only be done through video, resulting in a lack of verbal communication and body feelings.

f.   They were limiting the amount of time spent checking and evaluating student assignments. All instructors indicated that evaluating student assignments was difficult, with all requirements focusing on video performance, causing lecturers to become overwhelmed when checking student projects. Lecturers also encounter difficulties in evaluating students' outcomes, as they cannot assess all areas of knowledge acquired during the learning process. One approach to measure what speakers get in a speaking activity, as Luoma explains, is to look at the behaviors they conduct while speaking (Luoma, 2004)

g.   More preparation and specifics for teaching. Lecturers will require extra time to prepare a virtual learning plan because each topic and learning material must be innovative while still meeting the learning objectives.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that teaching speaking skills in the new normal period has both opportunities and problems, as seen through the eyes of three effective instructors in the UKI Toraja English education program. In general, speaking skills acquisition in English education programs in the new normal age takes place digitally (about 70%) and face-to-face (30%). As a result, it can be inferred that learning takes place in a blended or mixed environment. The material used is authentic material, most of which is taken from YouTube channels; increased student performance; increased self-confidence; students gain recognition from viewers and subscribers; students and lecturers become more creative and innovative; flexible study time is unlimited with space and time; student vocab is increased. There are problems in gaining speaking skills in English education programs and opportunities, such as the following: Financial constraints and suitable learning equipment; difficulties with the network and quotas; both professors and students have limitations when it comes to digital literacy. Students' laziness in completing individual work; a lack of direct spoken language practice; Time constraints in assessing and evaluating student assignment techniques; more preparation and details in teaching. The implications of this study are the improvement of digital literacy of lecturers & students, and the application of blended learning in the pursuit of speaking skills with the use of online learning media, application software, and appropriate evaluation methods, based on the findings and conclusions of this study.

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