

Developing the Content and Online Discussion Strategy in Blended Learning to Improve Students' Speaking Skill

Septian Riwaldi Sitanggang
Master Program of English Education Department, Tanjungpura University – Indonesia
septiansitanggang97@gmail.com

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Abstract

Collaboration of content and an online Discussion approach are critical in the epidemic era. Furthermore, discussion is one of the tactics that can be created in blended learning, which combines in-person and online learning. In terms of blended learning, the goal of this project is to improve students' speaking skills by generating content and an online discussion technique. As a result, the aim of this research is to determine the validity, practicability, and usefulness of this strategy for improving students' speaking ability. This strategy means to motivate students to have confidence in the discussion, involve them to lead discussion actively, able to create various topics to be discussed in the meeting, able to tell and respond among them, and able to give feedback to its discussion. The subject of this study is the fourth grade students of Sekolah Tunas Bangsa Kubu Raya in the Academic Year 2022/2023. By developing this strategy, it is expected that the students' speaking ability can be improved.

Keywords: Design, Developing, Content and Online Discussion Strategy, Primary Students, Speaking Skill

1 INTRODUCTION

The covid-19 brings a sudden impact not only for the people's activities but also the educational system all around the worlds. It brings a new challenges not only for the teachers but also for the students. It brings challenges to the academic community to redesign and realign its operation systems on instructional delivery (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020; Kaur, 2020). However, online learning is not a new learning trend in the area of education. Many schools all over the countries have ever tried this way even before the pandemic covid-19 happened. However, in the pandemic era, educational institutions will adopt either synchronous or asynchronous digital teaching methods for online learning (Karatas and Tuncer, 2020; Farros, Shawler, and Gatzunis, and Weiss, 2019). Schools commonly use these two basic types of digital teaching to support learning.

Weighing the benefits of online education learning for students to be independent and collaborative (Berge, 2000; Parker and Gemino, 2001, Chan et al. 2009). Another serious unnoticed consequence of current online education is the reduced chances for students to enhance their speaking skills (Tanian and James, 2002).

Referring to the students' need during this pandemic, online learning seems not really effective since some of the students do not enjoy the learning via screen. They sometimes leave their screen, do not listen to the teacher, sleep during the learning, eat and other activities that make their outcomes are not complex. This case brings us to a new learning style called blended learning.

The term "blended learning" was coined to describe learning that aims to combine face-to-face education with distance learning through technology (Caraivan: 2004). Besides that, Watson (2008) mentions that Blended Learning is a learning strategy that combines the benefits of in-person and online learning. In face-to-face learning, students can meet directly with teachers.

Blended learning, as a method of learning to improve students' speaking skills, can be supported by implementing a learning strategy. This method can be aided by a strategy called content and online discussion. An online discussion is one that occurs via the internet. As in face-to-face discussions, it is not a must for the teacher and students to present at the same time (Yuberti, 2019). The students also will have the different characteristic on content during the discussion.

Some previous studies on this topic have been conducted. One of them is by Pratama, Ikhsanudin, & Salam (2018). In this study, the researchers tried to uncover a student's

strategies to overcome speaking anxiety in a public speaking class. The researchers collected the data using the personal-narrative inquiry technique, semi-structured interview technique, and direct observation technique. The study found that the subject used rehearsal, relaxation, visualization, and gestures to overcome speaking anxiety in public speaking classes. Meanwhile, an instrument that he used was note cards.

This strategy is intended to improve students' speaking skills. The problems in this study are formulated as follows:

- How does the topic content used through blended learning help students enhance their speaking skill?
- How might students' speaking skill be improved through online discussion in blended learning usage?
- What is legitimacy, practicality, and usefulness of online content and discussion through blended learning in terms of enhancing students' speaking abilities?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Content and Online Discussion

(Durairaj & Umar, 2015) believed that teaching and learning quality is determined by the communication and participant. Discussion is one of the communication activities that should be used during the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, discussion is an important part of language teaching because it helps students improve their speaking skills. This learning concept typically takes the form of a question and answer format when it is being applied to the higher level of online discussion forums, with the instructor posing the question, students required or invited to respond, and the instructor positioned to confirm, refute, or provide the "right" or model response. Asynchronous communication is possible in online discussion forums, which promotes social engagement and teamwork without requiring learners to adhere to set communication times, as in online chat rooms. (Alzahrani, 2017). Not only that, online discussion will also a great way to be done in the classroom as the content of discussion given. It will be beneficial for the students' thought, ideas, experiences and others. Haris et al. (2014:98) believe as "text-based human-to-human communication over computer networks that allows participants to interact with one another to exchange ideas, insights, and personal experiences."

The topic or the content of the discussion is also affect the students' outcomes. The topic or the content must be challenging yet full of information and it is connected to the material of learning at the moment.

The topic also need to be open-ended that able to trigger the students' curiosity that lead them to have whether same or different perspective, suggestions, and arguments among the students (Wang & Woo, 2010). This way of teaching would be very beneficial for the students during the learning particularly improving their speaking skill. The online discussion with the open-

minded content will lead into the question and answer session or debate. If that activity is happening in the online discussion, means the content of the topic can be accepted by the students and it will improve the speaking skill.

2.2 Blended Learning

One of the most effective strategies available today is the face-to-face and online learning combination. Furthermore, the advancement of technology in the teaching and learning process can be used. The term "blend learning" was coined to describe courses that attempted to combine in-person and online learning (Caraivan: 2004). Besides that, Watson (2008) states that Blended learning is a learning method that combines the benefits of in person and online learning.



Figure 1 Components of Blended Learning

There are some benefits of blended learning such as cost savings, time management, and learner location, as well as the critical personal understanding and motivation that personal education provides (Brown, 2003; Rice, 2012; Yonge, 2014). Students can benefit from blended learning as they develop critical and reflective thinking skills (Garrison and Kanuka 2004). Northern Illinois University (2015) stated that Blended learning is adaptable and allows for the reuse of social and learning spaces. Blended learning's characteristics can be summarized as an effective learning method. It also helps students learn at their own place and time. It's a hybrid of digital technology and personal content that's utilized for online learning and personal content. Blended learning allows students to learn at their own pace while receiving feedback from their teachers. It is the most effective technique for teachers and students to communicate during the learning process. It's depicted in the diagram below!



Figure 2 Characteristics of Blended Learning

There are some importance to implement the blended learning as follow;

1. It assists students in the development of project and time management abilities.

2. Access to educational opportunities, workforce flexibility, and so on.
3. Flexible workforce deployment, access to educational opportunities, and so on.
4. Support the students to understand the information and make the students able to access the resources for the study.
5. Improve and motivate students to interact and do the collaboration among the learners.
6. Technologies such as Skype and Elluminate Live! Allow students to communicate and collaborate outside of the classroom, and help them practice effective communication skills.
7. Engage pedagogical practices. Help the students' performance in real world task faster.
8. Educational internet access has the potential to serve students anytime, anywhere.
9. Develop stronger emotions for students than face to face or completely online learning process.

3 METHODOLOGY

This is a design research project that employs a design-based research (DBR) strategy with four stages of development: initial identification and analysis, development planning, iterating cycle, and reflection Herrington et al. (2008). The subjects of this research will be primary 4 students in the 2019/2020 academic year. Among the data obtained in this study are product validity data, the satisfaction data with the method of teacher and students, data on students' learning outcomes in the form of data comprehending students' discussion themes, and attitude of the students in conducting the discussion. The information will be analysed qualitatively.

4 FINDINGS

The use of Design Based Research (DBR) in the development of content and online discussion. The first phase will consist of conducting a problem analysis and observing the effectiveness of online learning through blended learning in improving students' speaking skills. It will be fascinating to see how the combination of online and face-to-face learning, as well as the content approach and online discussion, pans out.

The phase will follow these activities:

1. The students will be given some discussion contents to be discussed among them
2. With the content given, the students will ask them to share ideas, opinions and discuss among them
3. During the discussion, the teacher will observe how enthusiast they are in doing the online discussion.
4. The students will be observed whether they also do the question and answer session.

The second phase will be designed as the reflection towards what have been done in the first phase, they teacher will lead the discussion for the reflection towards what they have done. This is the phase also to see the validity of the content and online discussion strategy itself. After the reflection has done, **the third phase** will be done by repeating the first phase to see how the

reflection works, the first phase will also do the same thing as the first phase with the different contents/topics for three times. **The fourth phase** will be done as the final reflection as the way to give the feedback to students' progress towards the online discussion time. Below is the table to provide the information related to the activities based on the teacher' observation.

During the final reflection period, students will be asked a series of questions to assess the content's validity and reliability, as well as the online discussion strategy. The questions will be shown as follow:

Researcher	What are your thoughts on the content that has been provided?
Student	
Researcher	What are your thoughts on the proposed online discussion?
Students	
Researcher	In your independent learning, how do you respond to the content provided?
Student	
Researcher	What do you believe this strategy will do for you in terms of improving your speaking ability?
Student	

The table above will contain a result of the interview with the students towards their feeling during the content and online discussion. It will provide information on a wide range of topics, intriguing topics to discuss, and how the discussion might help them develop their speaking skills.

It will be demonstrated how the development of material and online discussion technique through blended learning can increase the students' speaking ability based on the phases that have been completed.

5 DISCUSSION

Based on the aim of this research, the result of the study will see how the content of the discussion would be effective during the discussion. In addition, it will be examined how the content and online discussion method used in online blended learning might help students develop their speaking skills. The final goal of this study

is to determine the validity of this product creation in terms of student results.

To find out how this strategy might affect students' speaking skill is by analysing the qualitative data. It will see how far the effectiveness of the students along with the interview questionnaire given by the teacher.

There will be three parts as the discussion in this study, they are:

1. Content and online discussion strategy
This term will be designed as a result of the development of the classroom content and online discussion strategy.
- It can be seen from the various topics given by the teacher or prepared by the students to be discussed among them how this content is effective in developing the students' speaking skill.
2. Speaking skill
This is the main variable in this research along with the product "content and online discussion". The speaking skill of the students will be done by the observation of the teacher during the classroom. The progress of the students will be seen during the discussion. The teacher will see the moment where the students interest or not with the contents of the discussion. How can they deal with the contents and build the discussion alive.

6 CONCLUSION

This study focuses on content development, and online discussion is one of the ways that may be used to help students improve their speaking skills. Students will be examined to see how they might enhance their speaking skills by moving from activity to activity and from material to content. As the result will be, it hopes to see that the developing of this strategy would be effective in improving the students' speaking skill and attach more knowledge for them. This led to more research, which yielded more precise information and statistics that could be utilized to demonstrate how blended learning might improve students' speaking skills through content and online discussion strategies. This strategy hope also can be done to international schools or national schools. Not only English, it can be also done to other subjects.

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