Flipped Learning and Linguistic Self-Confidence

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of what kind of student benefits most from studying under the flipped learning method. A total of 43 Japanese university students studying in a language pedagogy course participated in this quasi-experimental study. Qualitative data was taken from 385 study journal entries and interviews with 15 of the participants. The language (i.e., English or Japanese) used by students in the journals and interviews was used to measure their linguistic self-confidence. The results suggested that students with high linguistic self-confidence perceive the videos used for the flipped class as beneficial for their learning but that they preferred to challenge themselves by reading the textbook without scaffolding from the videos. Students with medium and low linguistic self-confidence, however, indicated that they found the videos were beneficial for increasing their understanding of the content of the textbook and thus participate actively in discussions held during class.

KEYWORDS

CALL, Japan, University Students

INTRODUCTION

The search for the most efficient and effective instruction methods is usually at the forefront of teachers' minds, regardless of the subjects being taught in their classrooms. In language education, and especially in English as a foreign language (EFL) environments, the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching methods are of particular importance as students have fewer opportunities to experience the target language first-hand. Therefore, teachers need to consider techniques to reduce the amount of classroom time in which the teacher is merely talking at the students and increase the amount of time in which students can be actively involved in discussions, debates, and conversations. One method that achieves this and has received much attention over the past decade is flipped learning.

In a nutshell, flipped learning is a teaching methodology in which lectures and textbook explanations, traditionally performed by the teacher in front of the classroom with students listening, are recorded and made available to students via online video sharing websites, such as YouTube®. During class time, practice exercises and assignments, that students usually complete at home in a regular classroom, are completed under the teacher's direct guidance (Alvarez, 2011; Moravec et al., 2010). Because the amount of class time spent with the teacher explaining the textbook is kept to a minimum in the flipped classroom, more opportunities for students to actively participate in discussions are available. This creates classes focused on the students and their needs rather than being centered around the teachers and the chalkboard.

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There is no clear record regarding the birth of the flipped classroom method. Even though a specific terminology was not given to describe this teaching method at the time, Mazur (1997), and later Crouch and Mazur (2001), reported on physics classes in which students were given lecture notes a week before the actual lectures. Because students had already read the lecture notes beforehand, the majority of the designated class time could be spent concentrating on discussions, with the lecture notes being viewed as guides to assist students as they prepared for each lesson. Some academics suggest the flipped classroom concept originated from the work of Lage et al. (2000) with their suggestion of the *inverted classroom*. This approach to teaching, coined *classroom flip* by Baker (2000), has enabled teachers and students to take learning beyond the time and physical limits of the classroom, setting the tone for educators in the early decades of the twenty-first century.

The modern flipped classroom, which makes use of the creative benefits of Web 2.0, is often formulated from the advice of Bergmann and Sams (2012). Since then, this method, which now focused on providing students with guided preparation for class by using pre-recorded explanations of lesson content, has been highly regarded by countless instructors and widely investigated by researchers on a global scale. One of the most well-known examples of a lecture site often used for flipped classrooms is the series of instructional videos made available online by Khan Academy. Such an approach to education emphasizes that all people learn and concentrate in different ways and at different times (Khan, 2012).

Although many studies support the flipped learning method as one that effectively increases students' motivation and proficiency in language learning, there is little research that considers whether or not flipped learning is indeed beneficial for all students, regardless of individual factors such as motivation, language aptitude, or perceived proficiency. In this paper, I focus on the final of these factors, and whether or not the degree of a student's linguistic self-confidence can indicate their eelings about studying under the flipped learning method.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Flipped Learning

The popularity of the flipped learning model soared after the suggestions of how to successfully conduct flipped classrooms given by Bergmann and Sams (2012). Much of the early research was focused around the fields of science and mathematics. Strayer (2012), for example, reported on how he used the flipped learning model as part of his statistics classes. Strayer suggested that the students in the flipped classroom generally had positive outlooks on this teaching model. Moreover, the flipped learning model resulted in more opportunities for students to participate in cooperative learning as less class time was spent focused on the teachers' explanations of the textbook, and more class time was spent focused on the students doing practice exercises under the direct supervision of the teacher.

Similarly, in a study conducted with 67 post-graduate students in an epidemiology class, Moraros et al. (2015) suggested that most students in the course were satisfied with the flipped learning model. However, it was also discussed that the satisfaction with the flipped learning model did mirror the general satisfaction with the course overall. Furthermore, although 100% of the international students ($n = 24$) found the flipped learning model to be useful for studying, only two-thirds of the domestic students (i.e., from North America) shared these opinions. The difference in perspectives of these two groups may give indications that the flipped learning model is especially effective for classes conducted with students whose mother tongues are not that of the primary language of the class; the students can view and review videos at their leisure and, in the case of closed captions being available, the content of the lessons may be easier to understand than if the classes are conducted in a non-flipped way.

The effects of the flipped learning method have also gained the interest of researchers in the field of second language acquisition. Studies have shown the flipped learning model to be effective for

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