The Benefits of Integrating Video Making in a Speaking Class

Edi Dwi Riyanto
Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia
edi-d-r@fib.unair.ac.id

Abstract

Integrated teaching has been advocated and implemented for decades. Lately it has been accelerated by the development of video making. This study aims to investigate the benefits of integrating video making in a speaking class of the 29 first semester students of a public university in Surabaya, East Java Province, Indonesia. It employed action research which was done to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process of the class. The data were collected through direct observation in the classroom, video reviews, and survey. The findings showed that the integration of video making in a speaking class gave benefits to students in the form of four components i.e. social, language and literary, psychological, and technical. The class has been successful in integrating the video making in a speaking class which means that the integration may be applied again in the same class in the future or for a wider scope with similar conditions or settings.

Keywords: action research, integrated teaching, video making

INTRODUCTION

It is quite common when people say that they can understand written and spoken language but not able to speak it (Tatham and Morton, 2006). However, in educational context, this partial competence is not acceptable. A student is supposed to master the four skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Unlike the other three which are usually done individually, most speaking is done with the presence of others. It is a two way process in which people communicate opinion, information, or emotions (Florez, 1999; Howarth, 2001).

In the process of communication people are making and sharing meaning with others (Chaney, 1998). To share meaning, people need to master the four language skills. Lacking language skills as in mastering grammar, fluency and pronunciation may prevent good communication as seen in the performance of the students in Hong Kong (Evans & Green, 2007).

However, speaking requires the presence of others in the process of meaning making whether it be in the stage of producing, receiving, or processing of the information (Brown, 1994; Burns and Joyce, 1997). Language skills only are not enough. Speaking is a social activity, too. It involves social interaction. During a speaking moment, someone needs to listen, respond, and share information produced by others. Time and context are shared.

With its specific and complicated characteristics, speaking can be very burdensome for some people. In a master's thesis about Japanese English learners it's reported how a mistake in speaking might bring a punishment. This brings negative atmosphere to the social dimension of speaking, which can become a serious threat to speaking performance in the forms of inhibitions and apprehensions (Littlewood, 1981). Students think more of the punishment rather than trying to perform. The thought of beign afraid to be punished will inhibit students' performance. They will also have the feeling of being ashamed to be punished in front of the class.

Another vital factor which often creates problem for speaking is the timing. Unlike writing, in most cases speaking is an action to be done at once and cannot be repeated, edited, or deleted, to which a speaking class is designed. Another issue related to timing is allocation of speaking practice especially for the class with large number of students (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017), since too little time for adequate time distribution for each student. Those authors concern that "some learners dominate the whole class while others talk very little or never speak".

The latest development of technology of both in the hardware and software of digital video production has provided opportunity to produce video in a much more affordable way. More than two decades ago, Automatic Speech Recogniction (ASR) had been introduced to improve speaking leaning process (Egan, 1999). Bringing technology in speaking class can be a way to solve three problems namely social, psychological, and chronological aspects/components as explained above.

This article is a report of the implementation of the integration of the video making into the speaking class for semester one at a university level by focusing on its benefits as seen during observation and as perceived by students. This speaking class for semester one was designed to tackle those three problems by integrating video making as key activities. Two reasons for this are:

1. Those students had different backgrounds in terms of educational, social, and cultural backgrounds. Fifteen students were from urban high school of big cities of Surabaya. Others were from rural contexts. Furthermore, there was -one student who was from *pesantren* or Islamic boarding school. They also have different level of English even though have been enrolled in English Literary Department.
2. There were 29 students learning speaking in the same class sharing a moment of 100 minutes of each class sessions. That means less than 4 minutes opportunities for each student to talk. If the duration is deduced by instruction and explanation the length of time for students to speak was just about 2 minutes approximately, meaning timing becomes an issue in managing class in a conventional strategy.

Integrated teaching

As described above, several skills are needed for speaking (Arta, 2018). Some scholars have long believed in that teaching speaking should not be separated from teaching other skills. An objection of the separation of the four skills of language competence has been raised (Oxford, 2001). The main reason of the objection is that the separation contradicts with the use of language skills in normal communication. The other reason is because it is seen as in the wrong direction against the language teaching progression lately.

For Oxford language skills cannot be seen as a technical problem or a possession only which can be separated and segregated rigidly. To be operational those skills need supportive skills such as vocabulary and syntax which are overlapping each other. For Oxford such a view is called integrated-skill approach. It is also proposed that since the skills are seen as overlapping, the skills are interwoven with each other during instruction". This constitutes the integrated-skill approach.

Separating language skills into two domains of receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) are also quite common. However both domains are seen as supporting each other (Harmer, 2007). For Harmer, it 'makes sense to integrate different skills' to students in order to 'provide maximum learning opportunities'. Thus, the focus is on giving students the experience of learning language, not the skill in which the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing "should be treated as integrated, interdependent,

inseparable elements of language" (Ya-Chen, 2007). Integrating speaking, listening, and pronunciation has been reported as indispensable (Murphy, 1991).

For that reason the integrated and dynamic multi skill instructional models are more valued (Hinkel, 2006). It focuses more on the learner's communicative competence. In a real communication context, people deploy multiple skills. Thus in a classroom, students should learn the skill not in isolation but simultaneously in order to minimize the gap between learning process and actual language practice.

Further Oxford (2001) proposes two forms the approach namely content-based instruction and task-based instruction. The content-based instruction requires students to learn and practice all skills based on certain content such as history and mathematics. The nature of the content is suited with the proficiency level (ibid). Task-based model involves students in a certain task such as creating a wall magazine and enact a scene of a drama. The distinction of the two models is beneficial to see the nature of integrated teaching. However, Oxford encourages a combination of the two. In line with the encouragement of Oxford, this article is a report of a speaking class which combines the content and task for new students of a university. The contents are about the students themselves (experience, aspiration, and siblings), old-new social life (high-school vs university), and literary (characterization). The task is making the video out of those themes. This article is a report whether such combination brings benefits to students.

Previous related studies

The integration of video into language teaching and learning has been done for decades. This involves not only those four language skills but also non-language skills such as psychological and social. A recorded process of teaching and learning in a video provides an opportunity of limitless repeated viewing for many different kinds of purpose. Furthermore, even in the middle of playing, a frame of visual display can be slowed down or even frozen to allow much deeper look and investigation. Thus a recorded activity allows an opportunity for a specific kind of research in which self-viewing as well as other-viewing provide ways for self and group reflection (Tochon, 2001). Before the turn of the century one of the most widely used of video has been the micro teaching by which feedback to improve the teacher or future teacher may be improved (ibid). Using video students, teacher, instructor, and everybody else can see and observe the performance in the video.

Video is "both a witness and analytical tool" (Tochon, 2001). They are the witness of students' performances. At the same time, video can be used as data collecting tools consisting of visual as well as verbal codes to be analyzed for certain purpose of certain research. Talking about the process of making videos, it has been proven to involve many different skills such as language, psychological and social. The projects of video making improve the students' motivation, activity, interaction, and cooperation in the classroom (Jany, 2015) .

Students' motivation is a very important psychological factor for the success of learning. Approaches to teaching that focus on the development of motivation is growing more important (Shakirova et al, 2016). Thus, motivation and English Language pedagogy are vital areas so that both need to be investigated carefully. If students are motivated to learn, they will learn more (James, 2012). When they learn more, they are more likely to improve their knowledge and skills.

One of the forms of skills is known as social skills. Social skills constitutes students' capability to behave appropriately in a certain context while performing social task (Nowicki, 2003) such as managing team work, being tolerance, showing cooperation. Thus, interaction and cooperation are categorized as parts of social skills. In relation to video making process, it can be said that a video project promotes the students' social skills. Furthermore, it was perceived by the learners as providing motivation and giving a successful learning experience (Watts, 1989).

A video making is highly likely to involve a process of writing whether it be the story line or speech draft before the recording process takes place. During the course of draft writing which involved editing and rewriting, students increase their ability and awareness toward their own speaking skills. Usually in a writing class, student would submit their writing to their teacher. In the case of video making, students need to read their own writing for the purpose of video making. This process gave ample opportunities for students to evaluate and contemplate on their performances (Castañeda & Rodríguez-gonzález, 2017).

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is a report of an action research done in a speaking class of semester one class in a university with 29 students in it. It was designed to have 14 class room sessions, one mid-term examination and one final examination so that there were 16 sessions in total. The research was conducted in one semester to see how the incorporation of video making activities improve the speaking class. This video making was chosen especially to solve the problem of limited allocated time for each of the students to speak during the classroom sessions.

Action research involves the process of studying a real classroom situation to understand and improve the quality of actions or instruction (Johnson, 2012). The research was conducted to study a real class situation with the aim to improve the teaching and learning process in that particular class. It is part of the teacher- researcher's endeavor to understand more about his own class and at the same time involve himself in 'a process of improvement and reform (Hopkins, 2008). Following Hopkins, the process of this research was divided into four sequences: plan, act, observe, and reflect. However, in line with Hopkins's suggestion, the implementation of the process was not a linear progression. It was more like a spiral in a continuous cycle.

Throughout the semester students were asked to create 6 videos, 2 individual and 4 group videos as follows:

Table 1. Videos Made by the Students

No	Topic	Duration	Indiv/group
1	Siblings	6-12 mnts	Group
2	Past experiences	6-12 mnts	Group
3	Future plans	6-12 mnts	Group
4	Comparing high school vs university life	6-12 mnts	Group
5	Teaching one basic skill: Greeting, inviting people, agreeing disagreeing, giving compliment, apologizing-expressing anger	6-12 mnts	Individual, helped by 4 others as the "students"
6	Famous fictional characters	3 – 7 mnts	Individual

The choosing of the topic was in line with the progression from talking about someone they knew very well into making a plan. Meanwhile the topic number six was to

reinforce the basic skill they already acquired so that the videos were not about how they applied those skills but they shared their knowledge by teaching the skill.

Plan

In the planning stage, students were made aware of the video making activities as the main projects for the whole semester. Thus, from the first meeting the students were informed that the speaking class would be conducted using integrated approach, meaning that the students would need to listen, read, write, and speak with the ultimate activity was producing three video projects both individually and in groups. Students were informed that classroom sessions were very limited in providing adequate opportunity for them to speak. The alternative was that they speak outside the classroom by making videos. Groups were created and managed anticipate the coming assignments.

Details of the planning for the video making were given to students based on the assessment of the class progress. For example, topic number 1 (sibling), the lecturer assessed whether students had known each other adequately in order to work as a group comfortably and whether the students had acquired adequate knowledge and skills to discuss about siblings. The same assessment was done for the planning of the other five topics.

Throughout the semester, the implementation of the plan was divided into three acts, each followed by observation and reflection. In turn the reflection became the consideration in moving forward to the next act. In this fashion, there were small cycles of plan, act, observe, reflect.

Acts

The three acts consisted of preparation, action, and revision. The preparation covered creating psychological comfort, social bonding, and performing language skills such as describing people, objects, places, feelings and time. Lighthearted games were played to elevate the psychological and social atmosphere. Group discussions were conducted to assess the base line of students' language skills. Talking about people was among the first topics of speaking to improve both their language skills and social skills. This social skill would be developed later. To improve other language skills students were asked to listen, read, and write as much information as possible regarding certain topics such as siblings, past memories, and future planning.

The outputs from this sequence were group videos and their scripts about siblings, places, and past memories (topic 1,2,3). Special videos were made comparing the life of high school and university (topic 4). A big concentration was given to two topics comparing high school versus university life and making a future plan. Those two topics wrapped other language skills, i.e. listening, reading, and writing. The outputs were some videos and their scripts.

The second act dealt with basic conversational skills such as greeting, addressing, agreeing disagreeing, inviting friends, and giving direction. However, since respondents were English Department students, they were assumed to have adequate background knowledge about these skills. Thus, students were not asked to perform these basic skills in the class room; they were asked to conduct a micro teaching instead. This was to elevate the level of competencies in acquiring the basic skills, that was not only acquiring but also transferring the skills. Students were asked to do a sort of 'micro teaching' and record the activity in a video of 4 – 7 minutes.

The third act goes back to the topic of people with some deepening. Students were asked to read theories on characterization, read a novel closely, quote characterizations in the novel, and paraphrase the characterization to be performed in videos. The outputs were scripts and videos. These were to familiarize students with English literature and ways to analyze a character.

Observe

In line with those three acts above, three sequences of data collection were conducted consisting of direct classroom observation, video reviews, and survey. Direct observation during classroom sessions were done especially for the first act above to establish some preliminary assessment related to the progress of the class mentioned above. This progress assessment as the result of observation would become the basis for giving the further and more detail instruction of video making.

In this second sequence videos were reviewed and treated as 'witness and analytical tool (Tochon, 2001). The video reviews were taken from the performances of the first and second attempts of video making. Those videos were viewed outside the classroom by the teacher and then feedbacks were given to students to improve the next attempts of video making with special attention given to the process of the making. It is during these two sequences that the contemplation was done and the plan for improvement for the last act was made.

The third sequence was done at the end of the semester in which students' perceptions were surveyed. The questionnaire was to find the perceptions of the students toward the benefits of the integration of the video making into the speaking class. The students were asked to check the columns on the questionnaire and check highly disagree, disagree, can't say, agree, and highly agree. The questions are intended to find whether students consider the integration as beneficial for them or not.

Reflect

Reflect was the report as the manifestation of the reflection of the action research. Data gathered from direct classroom observation, video analysis, and survey were used to make the contemplation.

Since it was a cyclical process, the result of the first reflection would become the basis for the second cycle planning. The same was also true for the data gathered from videos. Those videos submitted before the end of the semester were used as mirrors of reflection. Each time data was gathered and analyzed, and some adaptations of the previous plan was made. For example, the timing of giving the video making assignment depended on the readiness of the students. A reflection was needed to make sure that the students were ready. Only the contemplation from the data of the survey was could not be given back to the class since the survey was conducted after the semester ended.

Thus, those small cycle of reflection were intended to ensure the best preparation for the next sessions. A more comprehensive reflection was done mainly using the data from the survey with the result below.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion of the data collected from the action research follows the three sequences of data collection above.

Direct classroom observation

The first was class room review which was mainly based on direct observation. The 29 participants were first year students. They showed eagerness and high spirit to study. They looked happy and seemed to feel that they had reached a great achievement of becoming a student of a university. However, it was also clearly shown that they had great expectation from the university and especially the lecturer. The dream to enter a university came true, now they were facing the real university.

Such a spirit and expectation were seen very clearly, for example in their being on time and being seated nicely before the class began. Students also responded toward greeting whether it be welcoming and saying goodbye enthusiastically, in unison, and loudly, a reminder of high school routines. This high school reminiscence needed to be dealt with. An awareness of social transformation from high school time to university life was discussed in a special topic and recorded in a video.

One of the students came and met the lecturer to discuss her transformation process of being a high school student in a quite remote area into a university in a big city. In this occasion review to the class was discussed. This was to help the student to deal with individual psychological issues as well as social and educational ones.

However, most of the classroom reviews were done in classroom group discussions. This was to see how students interacted and built connection among them. After 4 sessions the class was ready for the next level which required independent learning and team work. The transformation was based on several results of the observation and reviews:

1. the readiness of the students to be 'real' university students, leaving the habit of being spoon-fed
2. the competency to work independently to search and digest more knowledge
3. the capability to work as a team

Thus, from the first stage of data collection through observation and reviews of classroom activities, it was evident that respondents showed a gradual transformation from ex high school students into university students in which social, psychological and educational were eventually dealt with.

Video reviews

Time limitation which hinders adequate practice of speaking for these 29 students was dealt with activities outside classroom in the form of micro teaching and discussions. Students read, wrote, listened, and spoke with ample time. Video reviews helped them improve their process of video making. First and second videos were seen by the lecturer and then given the reviews in the classroom. The reviews included sonic and visual performances, verbal language, and non-verbal language. Furthermore, reviews of teamwork management were also conducted. The students raised the issue of scheduling in which they found it hard to find the right time to meet and work together.

Place and technology for recording were problematic to students. They always found the best place to get together, such as in discussions room of the main library, in their houses, or even in class rooms. However, when those places became the setting of the video shooting, some attention needed to be paid especially their level of noise and light. In the aspect of technology, the students of this generation were able to access practical and affordable gadget in the forms of smart mobile phones. Almost all students are able to record and edit videos. Yet, some students used entry level of camera.

First and second videos were evidence of the competence and capability of the students to produce video. This readiness gave way for the next level that is producing video with serious content. To do so, students needed to conduct some research such as by reading novels and theories of characterization. This would help them wrote a good script.

Survey

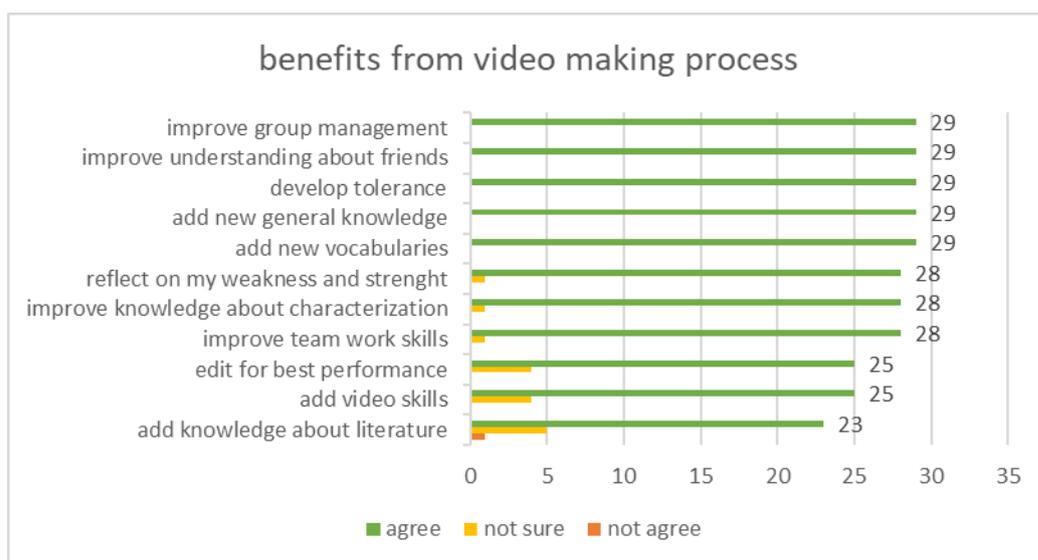The result of the survey is illustrated in the figure 1.

Figure 1. Result of the Survey Showing Benefits from Video Making Process

There were four main categories of benefits; language and literary, social, personal, and technical.

1. Social skills, included group management (100), understanding about friends (100), tolerance (100), team work (97)
2. language and literary skills, included gaining general knowledge (100), new vocabularies (100), knowledge about literature (79)
3. psychological skills, included reflect on strength and weakness (97)
4. technical skills, included video skill (86), edit for best performance (86)

From the Figure 1, it can be seen that all students agreed that video making process helped them improve their social, language and literary skills. In social skills, students learned how to manage their group and how to work with their friends. Included in group management skills were planning, distributing jobs, scheduling. Meanwhile students' understanding about their friends was more than just knowing names but also siblings, hobbies, future plans, and many others which in turn generated more tolerance. This wass because students talked to their friends about those topics.

Language and literary skills covered general knowledge, literary knowledge and new vocabularies. Reading novels, marking the characterization lines, and reading about characterization theories have brought more knowledge of literature. Later, the acquired knowledge was synthesized in the students' own video performance reviewing famous characters.

Only one student expressed the disagreement toward the perception that video making process helped improve student's psychological skill. The other 28 students agreed.

This psychological skill was acquired through reflection on their strength and weaknesses as seen in their respective videos. This was made possible because those videos were made to be seen repetitively, unlike a real speaking occasion which happen only once.

The psychological and social skills are in line with those proposed by Jany (2015) who included motivation, interaction, and cooperation. The benefits regarding language skill were also reported by Castaneda & Rodriguez-Gonzales (2017). Additional benefits found in this research were technical skill in making video and knowledge about literature as the content of the video.

CONCLUSION

The integration of video making into a speaking class has shown significant benefits to the students. From the survey students believed that the video making helped them improve their language and literary, social, psychological and technical skills. Their knowledge was also improved. As for the current issue, it appears that the incorporation of media whether it be video or audio to learning process has dramatically risen its importance due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The closures of classes have given ways for innovations and improvements in videos as alternative to ensure to continuation of learning.

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