Identifying Student Satisfaction in the Flipped English Class Enhanced With Clickers

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ABSTRACT

The flipped class has received great popularity in the last decade. This study, combining quantitative with qualitative research methods, randomly selected over 200 participants and adopted both structural equation modeling and bivariate correlation analysis, studied the factors influencing student satisfaction via corresponding scales that were evidenced valid and internally consistent. It was concluded that several factors, i.e., learner attitude, technology anxiety, teachers’ prompt feedback, flexibility of CFLC, and perceived usefulness and ease of technology, exerted significant influence on student satisfaction. The data collected from the semi-structured interview supported the results as well. The design of CFLC should not ignore learner attitude, technology anxiety, teachers’ prompt feedback, flexibility of CFLC, and perceived usefulness and ease of technology since they have great impact on student satisfaction. Future research, in need of multi-disciplinary cooperation, may also focus on course design, teacher satisfaction, and textbook choice.

KEYWORDS

Flexibility of Clicker-Aided Flipped EFL Class, Learner Attitude, Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Technology, Student Satisfaction, Teachers’ Prompt Feedback, Technology Anxiety

1. INTRODUCTION

Clicker system, made up of controller, receiver, computer, program, and multimedia projector etc., realizes the anonymous polling, which encourages learners’ participation in learning activities and improves the effectiveness of learning (Draper, Cargill, and Cutts, 2002; Lantz, 2010). Anonymity of clicker, coupled with the instant feedback, facilitates teaching and learning (O’Donoghue and O’Steen, 2007; Yu and Wang, 2016). However, clicker cannot function to a satisfactory degree unless it is applied to an appropriate instructional setting (Lin, Liu, and Chu, 2011). It is therefore important to determine which instructional style is proper for use of clicker.

The flipped classroom refers to the pedagogy where lecturing in the traditional class is flipped with the activities outside class, which means that the in-class lecturing activities

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are transferred outside class, while the out-of-class discussion and interaction are conducted in class in the flipped approach (Slomanson, 2014). In the flipped pedagogic approach, the traditional in-class lecture is delivered beyond class via videos and educational technologies accessible to learners at any time and in any place. This flipped model may be enhanced by clicker system that allows instructors to obtain simultaneous feedback to guide the teaching progress.

However, whether use of clicker in the flipped pedagogy is able to improve the student satisfaction is still a mystery since few related studies have been conducted. This study, aiming to explore the influence of use of clicker in the flipped pedagogy on student satisfaction, seems meaningful and worthwhile.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The latest decade has been witnessing the popularity of the “flipped classroom”, which inverts the traditional pedagogic approach by turning the traditional model of information delivery upside-down (Mazur 2009: 51). In terms of the teaching and learning standpoint, the flipped classroom sheds light on the student-centered teaching rather than the teacher-centered. The flipped class uses educational technologies such as clickers to enhance peer interaction and collaboration (Fitzpatrick, 2012). It also allows teachers to alter the lecture-centered instruction by shifting from the teacher lecturing to students’ self-directed learning (Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight, and Arfstrom 2013, p. 3).

2.1. Student Satisfaction

Previous studies have found that the flipped model failed to keep satisfying students, which indicated further exploration of contributing factors of satisfaction (Zhai et al., 2017). It has been reported that use of clicker system is satisfactory to learners in a variety of classes. Learners were demonstrated to be willing to adopt clicker technology as an aid to learning (McKeachie, 1990). Before class, the flipped class required students to internalize knowledge through web-based learning, which plays as a major role of the flipped learning. Learners adopt educational technologies to communicate with peers and instructors, to share opinions, discuss questions, and solve problems via online interaction. The educational technology-aided learning will therefore play an important role in determining the satisfaction of clicker-aided flipped EFL class.

2.2. Learner Attitudes

Learner attitudes, referring to the evaluation of a referent and motivation on the basis of one’s opinions (Gardner, 1985), exert a great impact on the effectiveness of educational technology-aided flipped EFL class. Learner attitudes may also indicate learners’ general disposition, mental impression or the way learners perceive learning contents, materials and instructors’ lecturing (Chapman and McKnight, 2002). Positive EFL learner attitudes may endow learners with significant advantages over those whose attitudes are negative (Doughty and Long, 2003), promoting learning effectiveness (Ellis, 1994), improving academic achievements (Vijaya and Soundiraraj, 2013) and causing learning satisfaction. The clicker-aided class, a promising pedagogic approach evidenced by numerous studies (e.g., Yu and Liu, 2014; Yu et al., 2014), may be able to cultivate positive learner attitudes through proper pedagogic design (Brown, 2000). However, very few studies have explored the influence of learner attitudes on student satisfaction in clicker-aided flipped EFL class (CFLC).

One of the questions raised in this study is therefore “Can learner attitude influence student satisfaction in CFLC?” and the hypothesis is: Learner attitude is positively correlated with student satisfaction in CFLC.
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