

The Effects of Flipped Learning on Output in the Japanese English as a Foreign Language Environment (日本の英語教育環境における反転学習のアウトプットへの効果)

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Many researchers of second language acquisition seem to agree that English as a foreign language students in Japan tend to be silent in the classroom. Various reasons for this lack of language production have been discussed, such as, low linguistic self-confidence, face-saving acts to avoid possible embarrassment, protection of self-worth, and few opportunities to use the language in an authentic way. With the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology - Japan directing English teachers to conduct their classes with more focus on communication, it is necessary to discover approaches to teaching English in Japan that encourage output from students. The present dissertation assesses the impact the implementation of flipped learning has on the language production of English language students in Japan.

This dissertation has the goal of discovering whether a flipped learning approach is effective in creating salient improvements in students' (1) linguistic self-confidence; (2) language production; and (3) linguistic proficiency. Multiple tests were conducted over three main studies with the findings from the research suggesting the flipped learning approach to indeed be a convincing way to improve the above three components. A fourth study was conducted related to the use of and authenticity of closed captions, what were discovered to be vital factors in the success of flipped classrooms.

The studies presented in this dissertation suggest that with the guided preparation for class that is offered in a flipped learning environment, students are able to attend class with confidence. They will be more aware of the issues related to the topic of the textbook, and thus prepared to answer and ask questions related to the class content. This linguistic self-confidence exhibited by students in these studies is especially apparent in self-perceived listening, speaking, and writing proficiencies. However, this may have been because the courses described in this dissertation tended to directly concentrate on the skills of speaking and listening, which had an indirect effect on students' writing skills. Thus, it could be hypothesized that in courses concentrating on reading, presentation skills, or language form and forms (i.e., grammatical accuracy) the use of the flipped learning approach would result in similar increases in the assurance participants had in their language abilities when they first entered the classroom. The study presented in Chapter 2 of this dissertation did indeed provide evidence that in comparison to a regular teaching environment, one which employs flipped learning appears to result in higher levels of performance among the students. Similar results would be expected in future studies.

Furthermore, in classrooms in which the flipped approach was implemented, greater amounts of interaction between students were observed, both in

discussion classes and English composition classes. With discussion topics being introduced beforehand, students were able to prepare and be ready to share their ideas and opinions with their classmates. In English composition classes, because the instructor had already provided explanations of composition structures via flipped classroom videos, students were prepared for class and thus able to construct their compositions during the class time while receiving immediate feedback from the instructor. There was also sufficient time to allow peer coaching, which promoted metalinguistic discussions among students. The flipped learning approach also appears to have had similar results in bringing about higher English composition proficiency for its students than a traditional classroom approach.

The videos used for the flipped learning environments investigated in the present dissertation all included optional closed captions, which could be removed from or displayed on the screen at the discretion of the students. Students were encouraged to watch the videos several times each week, using

the closed captions to assist in their understanding of the content, then removing the closed captions to train listening proficiency. Furthermore, it is important to note that the closed captions were timed to appear and disappear on the screen in intonation phrases exactly as the speaker was explaining the content of the textbook. Not only does the use of intonation phrases provide more authentic language for students, it also allows students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to experience the reality of spoken English in a way that has previously been neglected. With academic institutions in Japan now required to provide learning environments in which all students, regardless of any physical demands they have, are able to integrate smoothly with regular students it is clear that flipped learning, especially in EFL classes, is a valuable approach to achieving such goals.

The author concludes that the implementation of a flipped learning approach is highly effective for Japanese English classrooms. Theoretical contributions and pedagogical implications of the findings are also discussed throughout the dissertation.