TRANSFORMING WORRYING TO PRODUCTIVE RISK-TAKING: IMPLEMENTING ICT-CULTIVATED LEARNING (ICTC) IN INDONESIAN TEFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

The 21st Century and the Fourth Industry Revolution (4IR) bring with them new challenges to all aspects of our life, including how we do education and learning, and language learning in particular. In conjunction with this situation, most of Indonesian schools are now in a critical dilemma of the current practice of forbidding students to bring mobile devices to the classroom and expecting to optimize their uses for the students learning. However, the fear is far bigger than the courage to take risks of taking initiatives to solve the dilemma. As a response to this situation, the writer introduced to the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) in the schools, SMELT I 4.0 DE (Synergetic Multilayered English Language Teaching in Industry 4.0 and Disruptive Era), in which ICTC, the focus of this paper, is one of its layers. This paper is presenting some of the results of an initial stage of a longitudinal study of the model, starting January 2018. The data for this paper’s purpose were collected through observations, interviews, assessments, and document analysis, and it was found that ICTC helped develop students’ risk-taking behavior, learning motivation, engagement, and achievement as well as their character development. Based on the findings, some recommendations are presented at the end of the paper.

Keywords: Fourth Industry Revolution, ICT Cultivation, SMELT I 4.0 DE, ICTC.

1 INTRODUCTION

Risk-taking is crucial in educational processes [1], including in language learning, and often considered to be one of the most influential factors in foreign language learning success [2], and strongly correlate with both problem solving ability [3] and metacognitive awareness [4]. Studies show that risk-taking help students grow self-esteem, motivation, and self-confident [5]. Unfortunately, in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesian (TEFLIN) contexts, this behaviour is not well-developed [6]. Most Indonesian students tend to shy away from participation [7], they are worrying losing their face, lacking vocabulary, getting low scores, and using inappropriate expressions [8]. Students with low risk-taking behaviour is usually inhibited to speak, low-motivated, characterised with low self-esteem [9]. As a result, risk-taking is by no means easy to find in the TEFLIN classrooms, and therefore, efforts on encouraging students to take risk in their learning process are needed. To response the demand, the writer has been developing a model of ELT, called Synergetic Multi-layered English Language Teaching in Industry 4.0 and Disruption Era (SMELT I 4.0 DE), of which Information and Communication Technology Cultivation (ICTC) is one of its layers. In fact, this study is part of a bigger study on the implementation of SMELT I 4.0 DE in the TEFLIN [See 10-11].

ICTC is developed on the belief that ICT needs to be cultivated in all aspects of language teaching, including in those of the TEFL. Integration is not enough. ICTC is very strategic as far as the context of this study is concerned. The fact that the students are digital natives [Cf. 12] give good advantages to the teachers to take implement it in their teaching programs. In addition, the nature of ICT enables them to develop positive attitudes, including risk-taking in the students’ learning. For these reasons, ICTC in the framework of SMELT I 4.0 DE has been chosen to serve as the strategy of transforming students’ worrying to productive risk-taking in their EFL learning.

The significance of this study may be seen from the way ICTC help improve students’ risk-taking behaviour. In practice, ICTC in this context of study will involve flipped classroom design through Google classroom (GC). This will allow students to have time to edit before submitting their work, learn how to be punctual in the accomplishment and submission process, use multimodal and multi-semiotic texts, develop such positive characters as honesty, discipline, team-working, and responsibility. Hence, it is clear that using ICTC to transform students’ worrying to productive risk-taking is not only interesting but also motivating.
2 METHODOLOGY

This study used case study as its method, involving a teacher and a class of 29 students, learning English as foreign language in a senior high school in Bandung, Indonesia. The data were collected through observations (Obs) and video-taped recordings (Vtr), interviews (Int), assessments (Asm), and document analysis (DA), and analyzed qualitatively to see how ICTC benefit the students in developing productive risk taking in learning English as a foreign language in Indonesian contexts. The results of the analysis is presented in the sections that follow.

3 RESULTS

The result of data analysis has been organized in terms of the emerging patterns evident in the data collected. These will be presented in two sub-sections: Risk-taking behaviour Development and the Lessons Learned.

3.1 Risk-taking Behaviour Development

The development of risk-taking behaviour is evident in both observation notes and the recordings of teaching learning processes. To help readers understand the development process, the result of the relevant data analysis will be presented in two sub-sections: in its initial stages and in the operational stages.

3.1.1 In the Initial Stages of ICTC

Like other most Indonesian students, the students in this study were lack of confidence, lowly-motivated, and worrying losing faces and making mistakes in communicative activities, and mostly felt helpless about English. As evident in the observation [Obs 01_2018; Obs 02_2018], the looked puzzled when the teacher told them that the learning would be managed through GC. Bad mood was evident in most of the students' faces [Vtr 01_2018]. Only very few students seemed happy with the news [Vtr 01_2018]. The teacher was seen to do his best in creating dialogic situation, but failed. However, he decided to keep moving with the explanation on how the course would be administered.

The teacher was then moving to explaining how the topics would be organized, and the students seemed to be more puzzled [Vtr 01_2018], because the way and the orders of the topics were managed in different ways from the ways it used to be in conventional classes. When a simulation was initiated, the students started awkward discussion in groups. The teacher went around the classroom to make sure that each group was doing the right things [Vtr 01_2018]. A little joy was observed in the students' reaction when they were told that in their lessons, smartphones would be used along the teaching-learning processes [Obs 01_2018, and Vtr 01_2018].

The second meeting was far more interactive [Obs 02_2018]. The teacher gave a tutorial on how to register to GC. Their smartphones were collected from the school security office and distributed to the students. Using their own smartphones, they registered to GC (SMELT I 4.0 DE: The Teaching of English in Industry 4.0 and Disruptive Era Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Senior High Lab School). During the registration, the class was noisy. Some of the students were seen helping other students in the registration [Vtr 02_2018]. The session was then used to do a simulation of uploading students' works and online conversations with the teacher and other students. At the final part of the session, the teacher told the students the topic to be learned for the next meeting: writing a future plan.

3.1.2 In the Teaching-learning Processes

As suggested by the aforementioned principles underlying flipped classroom, in this case as integrated part of the ICTC, students started their learning outside the classroom [13, 14]. Surprisingly, students were far more engaged in the conversations, mostly on the nature of the assignments and the way to accomplish them [GC 03_2018]. This is enlightening. They tended to be more open and more active in asking questions, answering questions, and even commenting to the topic of the conversations, when they were online [GC 03_2018- GC 10_2018]. Their active participation also showed their enthusiasm in learning and maximizing their efforts in accomplishing the learning tasks and assignments [Asm 03_2018-Asm 10_2018]. This, for most of the students, was the beginning of their motivated journey to learning English in their life history. Few students, however, seemed to be still struggling hard to cope with their learning anxiety [Int 03_2018 and Int 04_2018].
The third meeting became the first classroom time most enjoyable for most of the students. The class began with ‘telling the lessons’ from their out-of-classroom (mostly at homes) learning. Most of the students seemed to enjoy the activities and came up with promising amount of learning, while the others with a moderate experience, and few of them missed the joyful moments [Obs 03_2018-Obs 07_2018]. To enhance students’ learning and entertain their achievement, the teacher asked 5 students to come forward to sing Megan Trainor’s Like I am Gonna Loose You. One female student played the keyboard, one male with the violin, and two other female and one male students as the vocalists. All the class joined the chorus:

So I'm gonna love you like I'm gonna lose you
I'm gonna love you like I'm gonna lose you

The teacher was then commenting on ‘m gonna and comparing it with am going to constructions, and to be going to in general. The session was concluded with some highlights on the relevant English expressions and learning assignment for the next meeting.

The out-of-classroom learning activities was administered online prior to the fourth session. Students came up with a wide variety of topics with the same generic features, including Planning a Food Festival, Planning a Music Concert, Planning a Speech Contest, etc. This session was a little bit more stressful, because this was the first time for the students presented their works in front of the classroom. Fortunately, the assignment was group assignment. Each group presented their texts, and using the rubrics the teacher posted in GC, they assessed their own works and reported their assessment as well as their plan for revisions, if any [Vrt 04_2018]. Afterward, the members of other group might give some comments and inputs for revision. The teacher reviewed the students’ works before the class started, usually two days before the class. This review is imperative because students’ works would also serve as the materials to be learn in the following meetings [DA 04_2018-DA 10_2018].

The revised versions of their texts were then uploaded again in the students’ worksheet in GC. Most of the works improved significantly with various degrees. To illustrate, see Fig. 1.

![Figure 1. Students’ Oral Texts Quality Development in Students’ Communicative Performance](image-url)

Each works were usually revised twice. In the figure, the scores for the first and the third drafts were represented in the chart compared to the ideal scores to be achieved in each work components (Pronunciation [Pron], Grammar [Gram], Vocabulary [Voc], Dramaturgical movement [Drama], and Recording quality [Rec]). Through revision activities, students made relatively large difference between the first and the last texts versions. For example, in terms of their pronunciation, the difference is 4.86, grammar 4.45, and vocabulary 4.45. The best improvement made in the quality of recording, reaching 7.76 and drama with 6.03. In general, the improvement is significant, from 78.55 to 84.06. The difference is 5.51, which is of course a big leap.

3.2 The Lessons

Some lessons may be taken from the findings discussed in the previous sub-section. First, while risk-taking behaviour is critical for successful English language learning, it needs a long time to develop, especially in the context of this study [Cf. 15]. Patience and consistent works are required to accompany students in their journey to developed risk-taking behaviour. In the data, it is clear that without these qualities in the part of the teachers, the students might have remained far from being motivated, enthusiastic, actively engaged and confident [cf. 16].
The second lesson is that the use of smartphones and relevant learning management system and resources is strategic as far as the context of this study is concerned [Cf. 17]. The fact that the students are digital natives gives advantage to the teacher in using digital devices, especially smartphones in the teaching-learning processes. Students began to love learning English as they were introduced to the use of the devices in their lessons, particularly in their involvement in GC. This may serve as the trigger of students’ motivation to learn and, later, to courage to take risks in their learning.

The role of ICTC is the third lesson that we need to discuss in the rest of this sub-section. ICTC run in this study gives a firm framework in developing students’ learning. Students’ consistent involvement in this framework may, in the long run, lead them to be digital residence [Cf. 16]. In this way of learning students may develop good digital literacy, high standard achievement, and positive character such as responsibility, honesty, discipline, respect, and collaboration [18].

4 CONCLUSIONS

This paper has been successful in showing ICTC helped develop students’ risk-taking behaviour which, in turn, improve their motivation, enthusiasm, and confidence as well as English achievement. In addition, it also shows that those improvement has only be achieved through long and consistent efforts throughout the students’ learning history.

Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. A further study with longer time and broader scope be conducted in similar contexts.
2. A more developed ICTC agenda needs to be implemented, especially in the framework of I SMELT I 4.0 DE.

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