ASSURE MODEL FOR TEACHING SPEAKING ONLINE: TEACHER SELF REFLECTIONS

by Maria Istiqoma

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Abstract

Transferring the form of face-to-face learning in conventional classes to online learning is not only as simple as changing learning materials into all-digitalization as not all teachers try to make a proper and organized preparation before starting the online teaching process. With the limited time to practice speaking skills at the National Institute of Technology Malang, the teachers are expected to have the right planning and strategies for their classes. Therefore, this paper reports on the the use of ASSURE model in teaching speaking online from the perspective of two English teachers in the National Institute of Technology Malang. This qualitative study relied primarily on in-depth interviews of the two teachers to gather the information. This research's findings and recommendations are expected to help provide insights in preparing and developing other online speaking classes to achieve better outcomes.

Keywords: learning model, ASSURE, teaching speaking, self-reflection

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I INTRODUCTION

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, all levels of education institutions started to use online learning, by all the possible and convenient means for their classes. However, transferring the form of face-to-face learning in conventional classes to online learning is not only as simple as changing learning materials into all-digitalization where the online learning component itself is still a challenge for lecturers. In this case, pre-class planning was expected to help teachers organizing their classes in a more goal-oriented direction. One of the learning models that can be applied in the teaching and learning is the ASSURE model.

Sahid (2017) stated that the ASSURE model is one of the guidelines that can help plan, determine, define goals, select methods, and materials, and evaluate. The ASSURE model is

more oriented toward the use of media and technology in creating the desired learning processes and activities. The components of teaching and learning activities are complete. It will help teachers to design and make changes to the environmental education that will support learners. Moreover, it requires students to be involved in the teaching and learning preparation.

The ASSURE model consisting of six stages of activity: 1. Analyze Learners, 2. States Standard Objectives, 3. Select Strategies, Technology, Media, and Materials, 4. Utilize Technology, Media and Materials, 5. Require Learner participation, 6. Evaluate and Revise (Heinich, Molenda, Russell, Samaldino, 2008). The advantage of this model, as proposed by Pribadi (2011) is that ASSURE model is able to analyze thoroughly all the components in learning, include students' characteristics, learning objectives, strategies, learning activities, and the assessment of the entire learning process.

Not all teachers try to make a proper and organized preparation before starting the teaching process and evaluation during or after it. This results in the unpreparedness of teachers and lecturers in dealing with obstacles that may arise in the teaching process as well as utilizing the strengths of the characteristics of the classes they teach. They only focus on delivering the material without paying attention to how to increase students' abilities to the maximum. Therefore, ASSURE model can be implemented as a solution to help teachers planning and organizing their class, as it is simple and relatively easy to implement in any level of education and skills, and more importantly, can be developed by the teachers themselves as needed.

Teaching Speaking using ASSURE Model

Teaching speaking skills aims to improve the learner's ability to communicate effectively (Thamarana, 2018). English is a compulsory non-expertise subject in the National Institute of Technology Malang. Therefore, the English

lecturers need to put more effort into organizing an enjoyable online learning process (Prihatmi, 2021) for accommodating the four English skills, includes speaking. With only 2 credits during the study period at ITN Malang, there will be insufficient time available to teach speaking skills. The teachers are expected to have the right planning and strategies for their classes. Thamarana (2018) argued that there are three stages in speaking strategies, which are pre-speaking strategies (involve prior knowledge), while-speaking strategies (involve observing non-verbal motions) and post-speaking strategies (involve the activity's result). This theory is exactly in accordance with the six stages proposed by ASSURE model.

To date, only a few research done specifically on the application of the ASSURE model in the field of online speaking learning. In fact, ASSURE model offers notable benefits for some classes. Previous research by Achmadi, et al. (2014) found that ASSURE model with PowerPoint media can significantly increase learning motivation and learning achievement of class X students at MAN Sukoharjo in their English class classically, and increase their understanding of education technology. Rahman (2017) even argued that the ASSURE concept is applicable to any school or district lesson plan pattern as it employs some ideas and techniques to make the English teaching and learning process more effective in order to attain the desired learning outcomes.

Planning, analysing, and evaluating a class is never an easy work. This paper, therefore, seeks to find out teacher perspectives in using ASSURE model in their online speaking class as an effort to find the effectiveness, strength and weakness, and clarify the effectiveness (Conrad, 2009). By sharing the experiences and perspectives, it is expected to help provide insights for other teachers in preparing and developing their online speaking classes to achieve better outcomes.

II RESEARCH METHODS

This study aimed at finding answers to the main question: how the two teachers prepared their speaking class from the perspective of ASSURE model. In line with the nature research question which is to "describe the experience from the personal perspective of an individual", this study is qualitative phenomenology research concerned with the study of experience, assumptions, and usual ways of perceiving something (Lester, 1999). This methodology helps to understand a subjective experience, that is, gaining insights into the respondent's motivations and actions. Phenomenological research relies primarily on in-depth interviews to gather the information. However, participants must be homogeneous, that is, experience the same situation or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the instrument used in this study was the online interview of the two online speaking teachers at the National Institute of Technology Malang named Ms. Puji and Ms. Anjar. Both of them have taught speaking skills during the pandemic for at least two semesters. Padget (2017) emphasized that the data analysis of the phenomenological interviews was aimed to find out the important clues or common themes in their experiences. The interview's topics covered the six areas proposed by ASSURE model then transcribed in a narrative form. The supporting data used were the teaching modules used by the speaking teachers.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Instructor's perspective: Ms. Puji

Analyze learners

The purpose of teaching speaking is to be able to communicate effectively. During the speaking class, the students are expected to speak fluently, pronounce correctly, utilize appropriate stress and intonation patterns, and communicate in connected speech (Harmer, 2007). To avoid any obstacles that might disturb its process, I would like to identify the characteristics of students as a preceding step I took. The student characteristics here could be classified into 1. place of residence, 2. time difference, 3. signal/internet network used, 4. preference of gadgets used when online (laptop/personal computer or cell phone. Then I made questions from the characteristics I made and distributed questionnaires to students to be filled out within a certain time. After the data was obtained, I would utilize the data as a reference in composing lesson plans.

State standards and objectives

In setting learning standards, I had implemented the ABCD model: A (Audience/learners with their characteristics), B (Behavior/ability to be mastered), C (Conditions/conditions that support learning), and D (Degree/requirements as to standards/competencies) of learning objectives).

Select strategies, technology, media, and materials.

I chose the Speaking learning strategy by considering the three stages in teaching speaking, namely: pre-speaking strategies, while-speaking strategies, and post-speaking strategies. In terms of choosing the technology format, media, and learning materials that would be used to achieve the learning objectives, I considered the results of the questionnaire obtained when analyzing the characteristics of the learners. In the class, the use of internet technology with synchronous and asynchronous systems was applied. I also employed several social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. And for virtual synchronous systems, I prefer to use zoom because it is more stable and supportive in its feature.

Utilize technology, media, and materials

In utilizing technology, media, and teaching materials, I did the first trial with colleagues, it was once taken before carrying out the synchronous Speaking Class with students so that it could function effectively in real learning circumstances. The obstacles I often encountered

in speaking classes are network stability, student motivation, and involvement during the class.

Require learner participation

I always involved students actively in the material or competencies expected in the speaking learning process. The efforts that I did in involving students in learning were by providing training and feedback. Some speaking practices such as presentations, group discussions, questions, and answers are presented through zoom classes, and other activities are carried out asynchronous through LMS Spada. The speaking practices were done by attending zoom class, whereas some feedbacks were given on some social media platforms, like giving some comments on WhatsApp or Instagram.

Evaluate and revise

The last stage that I did was to make revisions or improvements to the lesson plan I made, so that future learning designs would have continuous improvements.

3.2 Instructor's perspective: Ms. Anjar

Analyze learners

To begin with, conducting a speaking class during a pandemic is somewhat struggling in the sense that the teachers are still on the way to have the best methods to apply in the online setting. Let alone the students who require accommodating the need to learn and the obstacles hurdled along the way were to face the fact that they would have a little to no adequate conducive learning ecosystem. The learners in the speaking class I conducted were the ones with individual differences. They may have different reasons for needing English, language aptitude, previous learning experiences, boredom, learning styles, and motivation. Aside from their differences, they have one thing in common that was the level of competence. All learners in my speaking class were in A1 a breakthrough level of competence.

States Standard Objectives

Never have I conducted a class without setting the standard objective upon which I based the bare minimum achievement that my class should meet. However, during the pandemic with the online setting, I made some particular changes here and there that best accommodated my class needs without neglecting the obstacles along the process. There were two main goals throughout the class; the micro skill and macro skill of speaking as proposed by (Brown, 2004)

. The first objective I set was the learners were able to activate their micro speaking aspect which mainly falls for phonetic accuracy in pronouncing the words. The ability to produce correct words was the bare minimum competence that I need my students to achieve. The second goal was more on the macro speaking skill which mainly dealt with fluency and discourse. The fluency referred to the flow of the ideas the learners bore in mind. They were expected to be able to communicate their ideas in the correct word order. Whereas, the learners were exposed to two main discourses which aligned with the theme; narrative and descriptive. By the end of the course, they were expected to be able to not only identify but also present a narrative and descriptive text of their own.

Select Strategies, Technology, Media, and Materials

The emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic forced all aspects of life done in the online setting. Teaching was no exception. There is no best strategy in teaching online. The strategies I imposed in my speaking class were lecturing and individual show. The class was conducted based on three stages; pre-speaking activities, whilst-speaking activities, and post-speaking activities. The pre-speaking activities covered Q and A activities to introduce the topic of the material discussed. Having done with the brainstorming, the next activity was the teacher explaining the material dealing with the syntactic structure. Upon being knowledgeable with the explanation given by the teacher, the learners were given opportunities to conduct their speaking material. However, the evaluative section was done in brief by giving them feedback following the syntactic and phonetics mistakes or errors made during the process of creating and delivering their product.

Furthermore, conducting a speaking class during a pandemic was challenging since I must select the best provider and teaching application platform that best replaced the absence of conventional media such as whiteboard and board marker that proven effective to accommodate the teaching and learning process. Aside from the number of applications that I could simply pick, I had to mind some aspects over the selection of online teaching platforms. One of which is the economical aspect.

Utilize Technology, Media and Materials

The attempt of giving the best teaching and learning environment was one thing, selecting the best screen sharing online teaching media was another thing. I fell for Google meet as the selected online teaching platform due to the following aspects; 1) being user-friendly, 2) being economical for both the teachers and students, 3) being spacious in capacity.

In addition, utilizing social media was a mere way to reach the students easily. Telegram and WHatsapp were social media platforms I frequently used.

The next important aspect of the teaching and learning activity was the teaching material used. It was in a form of a self-tailored student's handout that I shared to the WhatsApp group that was intentionally made before the speaking class. All the written form of communication was done in the group. It covered material sharing, announcements, asking and giving students leaving permits, and further discussion over the material given.

Require Learner participation

Since the speaking class was done online, it was beneficial for the students in the aspect of preparation. Gen Z was so digital that they barely had obstacles in the operating gadget. When I introduced the topic, they could easily connect to the internet provider right away and surfed on any information they needed to support them in the class. They were active in searching for words or expressions discussed in a wink of the eye.

However, apart from the beneficial aspect, there were some drawbacks of teaching speaking online for both the teachers and the learners. The internet connection was the mono culprit to the success of conducting the teaching and learning process. Whilst teaching troubles potentially happened throughout the class coming from both the teacher's connection and the students' connection that could not be shot quickly. There were always delays in the conversations between the teacher and the students.

Evaluate and Revise

Evaluation and revision were two aspects of teaching that may not be taken for granted. The first evaluation needed was more on the technical problem. How fast the troubleshoot could be applied in the teaching and learning process needed further consideration. The second evaluation fell for the methods applied. The teacher could not place objective feedback over the student's performance since most of the time the students do not show their actual competence. They activated their ability in searching for information from the internet in the flash of light and they simply read what was in store for them without us anticipating it.

Therefore, the revision I proposed was the material should enable the students to reflect their actual speaking competence.

3.3 Discussion

ASSURE model requires the teachers to do an "*Analyse Learner*" before conducting the class, which turned out helped them to recognize the characteristics of their student and to state the class' learning objectives. In selecting "*Strategies, Technology, Media, and Materials*" the obstacles reported are network stability, student motivation, and involvement during the class. However, by doing the initial "*analyse learner*" stage, teachers were able to minimize the shortcomings of these obstacles, by utilizing various media and platforms to communicate with their students. In term of "*Require learner participation*", we found that the teachers agreed that since the speaking class was done online, the students had more time to prepare and surfed the answers asked by the teachers immediately, therefore it eventually improved their speaking grades and cannot be fully considered as their actual competence. Lastly, evaluation and revision were done in the scope of technical problems and methods. By accomplishing this stage, the future learning designs would have continuous improvements.

IV CONCLUSION

Conducting a speaking class during a pandemic was challenging. However, employs some methods to make the teaching and learning process more effective to attain the desired learning outcomes is a must. Reflecting on the overall two teachers' experiences, using the ASSURE model in online speaking class is a very possible thing to do and the teachers don't even have much difficulty in implementing it. Despite the technical problems arose along the process of teaching and learning activities, providing the students with both material and technology best suited and supported the condition should be put into consideration. Finally, we suggest the next study include mixed methodologies and cover a larger sample size.

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