Exploring the Strengths and Weaknesses of Teaching Speaking by Using LMS-Edmodo

by Rifki Irawan

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to explore the strengths and weaknesses of teaching speaking by using LMS-Edmodo based on the teacher's perceptions. This research is a qualitative descriptive approach that involved one teacher as a participant. Observation, documentation, and interview are three kinds of instruments which were applied to this research. The data were collected by using three stages of qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which were data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Based on the teacher's perception, the strengths of teaching speaking by using Edmodo are its economy, privacy, simplicity, and flexibility. On the other hand, time-consuming, harm to the teacher's health, slow loading if The aim of this research is to explore the strengths and weaknesses of teaching speaking by using LMS-Edmodo based on the teacher's perceptions. This research is a qualitative descriptive approach that involved one teacher as a participant. Observation, documentation, and interview are three kinds of instruments which were applied to this research. The data were collected by using three stages of qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which were data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Based on the teacher's perception, the strengths of teaching speaking by using Edmodo are its economy, privacy, simplicity, and flexibility. On the other hand, time-consuming, harm to the teacher's health, slow loading if lacks of internet connection, the error of the system, easy for students to copy and paste their classmates' assignments are its weaknesses.

Keywords: Strengths and Weaknesses, LMS-Edmodo, Teaching Speaking

1. INTRODUCTION

In industrial Revolution 4.0, new strengths and weaknesses for the formal education system are encountered by all teachers in Indonesia because of technological transformation. Computer, Internet and social media are examples of those transformations. The existence of Learning Management Systems (LMS) technologies can facilitate the teacher to conduct a teaching and learning process. Nevertheless, the use of LMS technologies in Indonesia has not been well implemented yet in supporting teaching and learning. In fact, only a few teachers used it in their daily activities. It happened

because they lacked the knowledge to manage it; as a result, the benefits of technology cannot help them to increase the quality of education.

As a result, those factors have an effect on the lack of research in Indonesia about LMS technologies implementation in the education field. For this reason, this research attempted to enrich the research in Indonesia about LMS, especially exploring the strengths and weaknesses of using LMS-Edmodo in teaching speaking.

One of the macro skills in English teaching and learning is speaking. Like writing, speaking belongs to a productive skill. There are so many definitions of speaking that have been proposed by some experts in language learning.

Speaking can be identified by the process of sounding words from our mouth during a speech or conversation to communicate, convey ideas, feeling and mind. Speaking is the productive oral skill, which consists of producing systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning (Nunan, 2003, p. 48). Speaking is a productive skill which can be observed both directly or empirically in which the observations are influenced by the accuracy and the effectiveness of the students' listening skills which compromises the reliability and validity of an oral production test (Brown, 2004, p. 140).

For some people, in order to be able to speak English fluently, they need to be able to pronounce phonemes correctly, use appropriate stress and intonation patterns and speak in connected speech. However, speaking is more than those activities because speaking is a productive skill, which involves the speaker to use speech to express meanings to other people (Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams, 2005, p. 34). Speaking is the active use of language to express meaning so that the interlocutor can understand them. It means that the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing the language since speech is the most basic means of human communication (Cameron, 2001, p. 40).

In the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the use of technology in education spreads rapidly. This happened because of so many advantages offered by utilizing it. One of the technology tools used in education is Learning Management Systems (LMS). There are so many definitions of LMS proposed by other researchers.

LMS allows the increase of learning experiences of information and computer technology (Soliman, 2014, p. 753). By LMS, the students can read so many infinite information in the form of written form, audio, video and etc that depends on their needs.

Furthermore, they can follow the development of computer technology by actively browsing on the internet.

LMS which is the use of Internet technologies to increase knowledge and skill offers the students to control the contents, pace, and sequence of learning, time, and media (Jorge, Mintzer, Rosanne, & Leipzig, 2006, p. 207). Unlike learning through (f2f) meeting, learning through e-learning is not restricted by the time and place. The students who are under supervised by the teacher can manage all activities including giving comments or suggestions to other students' work.

LMS is a learning that is connected with internet/intranet network, which can use to enhance traditional learning (Itmazi J. , 2008, p. 156). In other words, e-learning is not proposed to exchange the f2f meeting, but it improves the quality of the traditional meeting, which is popular in the term of blended learning.

From the above-mentioned definitions, the researcher defines LMS as an interactive approach which is not restricted by time and place like a traditional or f2f meeting learning and the existence of this technology does not exchange the traditional one but it enhances and collaborates each other to achieve the goal of teaching and learning effectively.

Self-paced and facilitated/instructor-led are two approaches to e-learning (Ghirardini, 2011, pp. 10-11). The difference between two approaches is students work alone and independent in a self-paced approach, while in facilitated and instructor-led, it offers different levels of support from tutors and instructors and collaboration among students.

There are three approaches of e-learning, which are enhanced approach, blended approach, and online approach (Itmazi J. , 2008, p. 156). In an enhanced approach, by using web-based technology, e-learning is used to support, assist and increase the f2f learning. The reduction of using e-learning must be no more than 24%, even this approach can decrease some academic seat time. Then, a blended approach is a combination of traditional f2f and online learning. Most of the materials are delivered online in this approach and it can reduce 25 to 74% of f2f meetings. Last, online approach that applies without needing a f2f meeting, and only require the virtual learning (VL).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The data of this research were obtained based on the researcher's teaching schedule, which held once a week and it took 2 hours in each meeting. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the participants. The researcher intentionally selected the participants who could provide the best information to achieve the objective of the study. The research participants of this study were an English lecturer.

This research belongs to a qualitative descriptive approach. The phenomenon and valuable information will be explored deeply that will offer a way to see the issue from the subject view (Alwasilah, 2000). This method is also considered appropriate because it can investigate the teacher and students' perceptions about a phenomenon (Maxwell, 1996, p. 17).

In collecting data, the researcher used three instruments. The instruments in this research are observation, documentation and interview. Observation is the procedure of collecting open-ended, tangible information by monitoring individuals and research sites (Creswell, 2012, p. 213). The researcher did the observation to monitor the implementation of Edmodo media in English speaking activities, particularly its strengths and challenges. Therefore, all the teacher's and students' activities such as comments, messages both in the f2f and online learning that were related to the Edmodo's strengths and challenges were examined.

Because the focus of this research was on Edmodo, so every activity on Edmodo such as messages, assignments, comments, and postings were observed. When the researcher found the activities containing strengths and challenges indication, a screen capture was used to record the data.

In qualitative research, the interview is divided into three types. The types of interview in qualitative research are informal (unstructured), semi-structured, and formal (highly structured or standardized) interview (Muhtar & Nuraeni, 2014, pp. 41-42). In this research, Semi-structured interviews were seemed appropriate as a means to understand the experiences of the subjects because the goal of this research explored the strengths and challenges of using Edmodo as e-learning on speaking activities and tried to find the freer response from participants of some basic ideas that need to cover.

The interview was in Indonesian in order to prevent misunderstanding and managed to pursue the students' and teacher's perception toward the strengths and challenges of

using Edmodo as e-learning on speaking activities. The interviews recorded and transcribed were used to avoid inaccuracy and incompleteness data.

Then the data gathered were analyzed using the three stages of qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

3.   RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Based on the teacher's perception, Edmodo has much strength when it is used to teach speaking. Its strengths are economy, privacy, simplicity and flexibility.

Economy

Many websites of learning management systems such as Latitude Learning, Academy of Mine, and eFront are not free to be accessed by its users but Edmodo is different from them. Although many benefits provided by this LMS, it cannot make requiring fees in joining and using all its features. The teacher also stated in the interview as represented in excerpt 1:

Excerpt 1

"I do not need to pay to access this useful e-learning (Edmodo)"

This is in line with Prasad & Prasad (2012) who state "when implementing Edmodo in speaking activities, the teacher does not need to pay any fees." Therefore, freedom access supports everyone can utilize Edmodo in learning.

Another economy strength of Edmodo is it is friendly to the environment because of saving paper (Khodary, 2017). As also stated by the teacher in excerpt 2:

Excerpt 2

"The use of online media can reduce the use of paper and can save the earth"

In a conventional classroom, the paper is very important for the students to write notes and to do assignments. They will get problems when they left their books and sometimes could not do anything without it. On the Edmodo class, paper and book are not too important like in the common classroom because they are not the main media for the students to study both getting information and training their skills.

Printing worksheets, making copies, distributing them to students are not necessary for this class. (Mokhtar, 2018). Furthermore, the teacher does not need to accept many

papers from the students when they submit their assignments. He also does need to bring anywhere the students' work when he wants to assess them.
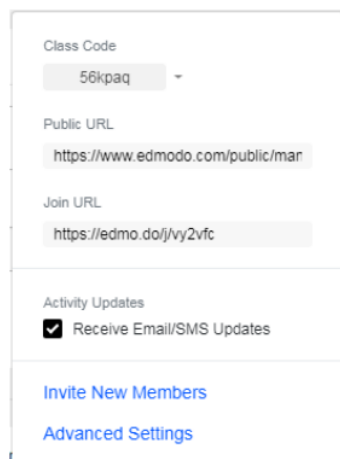
Privacy

Like a Facebook, Edmodo also provides profile appearance, comments and posts; on the other hand, in the aspect of privacy, they are different. Edmodo offers a safe, closed network that no strangers can read the students' posts or visit it without the teacher's approval. The new students who want to join an Edmodo class should ask the teacher a group code which changes daily.

Excerpt 3

"to join my Business English class, the students should type the code of the class, if no, they will not be there"

Moreover, there is none except their classmates who can see what they have posted on Edmodo and they cannot discuss with them (Deshpande, 2016). For these reasons, Edmodo is private e-learning that the students can publish their idea and work.

Figure 1. Edmodo Class Code

Simplicity

For the teachers who are the first time using Edmodo, sometimes they got difficulties in operating it. However, it is not a big problem for them because it provides the help centre, which is located in the top corner of the website (Khodary, 2017).

This case is also similar to the teacher who does not know how to see the students' progress and to assess them. After that, he clicks the help centre and found the solution there.

Excerpt 4

"this is the first time for me to implement Edmodo in the real class, sometimes I do not understand how to use this e-learning, but all solutions have been provided in the help centre menu."

On Edmodo help centre, the solutions to the problems are not only in the written form but also in the video and online service. Hence, this support makes the teachers get the easiness of implementing Edmodo in their teaching.

Figure 2. Edmodo Help Center Menu

The teacher teaches many students. He teaches ten classes and each class consists of thirty students. According to the teacher, Edmodo helps him to manage many students. This is in line with Itmazi (2008) that state Edmodo makes easy to manage a large group of students.

Excerpt 5

"It is easier to teach about three hundred students by using Edmodo"

Excerpt 6

"I like the auto-grading systems on Edmodo, I do not need to examine one by one of the students' works but the system will process then the score will appear automatically."

In addition, Edmodo provides auto-grading systems, which helps the teacher to give the score of students automatically. In the paper-based assignment, the teacher should check the students' works one by one. Besides wasting time, sometimes the teacher does not accurate to assess the students' work because of fatigue. Consequently, many students protest about their scores to the teacher and it creates another problem. However, this problem will not be faced when implementing Edmodo. The teacher only requires preparing the questions that want to be added in the quiz. The quiz can be in the forms of multiple choice, short answer, fill in the blank and matching.
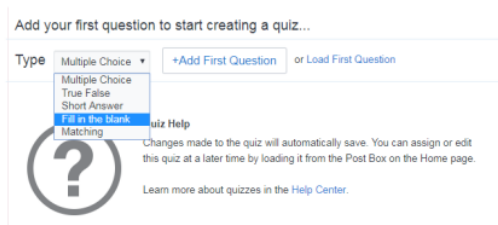
Figure 3. Creating a Quiz on Edmodo

After the quiz was posted on Edmodo and the students did it, the teacher will get notifications from it and he will directly see the students' quiz score report. The report describes the students who got high scores and break the total correct and incorrect questions in the form of a percentage.
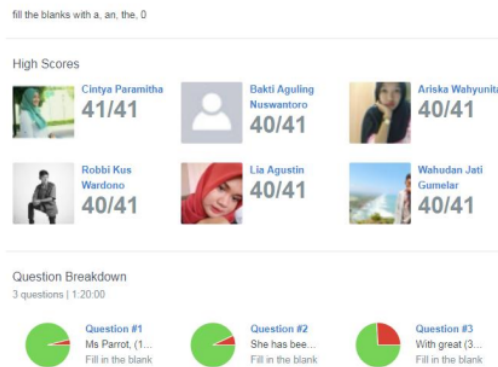
Figure 4. the Students' Quiz Score Report

Moreover, overviewing all students' progress and automatically exporting them to Microsoft Excel is another Edmodo strength got by the teacher. Processing overall students' speaking scores into final scores is not an easy job. The teacher should prepare one book to write every score got by the students. At the end of the semester, the teacher

should input them manually to Microsoft excel before really obtain a students' final speaking score. Nevertheless, the teacher does not require those steps.

Figure 5. Edmodo Students' Progress

Excerpt 7

"*Edmodo is amazing e-learning that makes me easy and quick processing the students' final score.*"

Flexibility

In terms of flexibility, Edmodo has several strengths. First, the teacher is flexible to provide many materials from internet sources. Learning materials which the students need and interested in can be selected by the teacher from an increased quantity of courses provided online (Itmazi & Tmeizeh, 2008). Internet, especially websites, is the big source of dispersal information without time and space limitation (Dogruera, Eyyamb, & Menevis, 2011, p. 610). Due to this benefit, the teacher looks for, chooses the valid and appropriate materials from the internet source, and posts them in the Edmodo class.

Excerpt 8

"*On Edmodo, I can add links from other websites as a further explanation for students.*
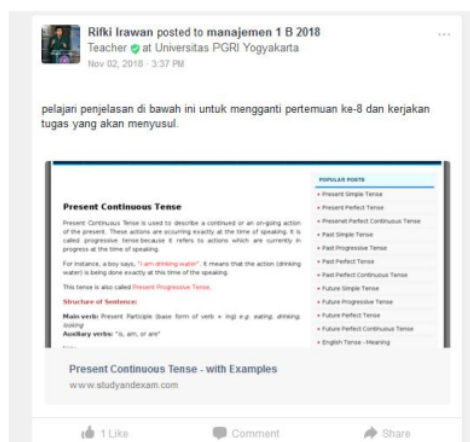
Figure 6. The Web-Based Materials Posted to Edmodo Class

Furthermore, Edmodo enables teachers to upload lessons material such as word, excel and PowerPoint Presentations (PPTs) files and videos any time and any place (Hankins in Khodary, 2017). Occasionally learning sources on the internet is not appropriate with the lessons taught and the teacher should create his own materials. Edmodo supports the file attachment written by the teacher himself.

Excerpt 9

"besides adding explanations from another website, I can also attach my own explanation because sometimes it is not too appropriate with the topic given."

Occasionally, the teacher has another agenda and he cannot come to the classroom. For that reason, he can post the learning sources as the explanation from the book or another website as the students' learning sources. Without a face-to-face meeting, the students still could study the materials effectively and they could ask the teacher when they got difficulties in the comment column.

Second, by using Edmodo, the teacher can maximize the number of speaking practices without needing a face-to-face meeting. In other words, it improves the quantity of the students' learning outside of the regular classroom (Khodary, 2017). Every week, the teacher only has one hundred minutes teaching in the classroom; however, he should teach and assess the speaking abilities of thirty students. If each student is given ten minutes of speaking, one meeting will not be enough for all students to give their best

speaking performance and it will affect the number of meetings allocated during one semester.

Excerpt 10

"besides adding explanations from another website, I can also attach my own explanation because sometimes it is not too appropriate with the topic given."
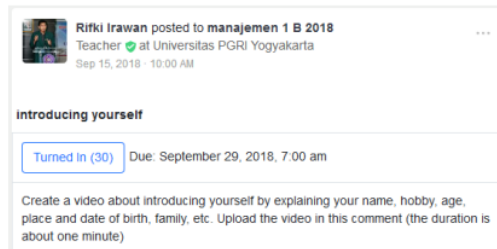

Figure 7. A Speaking Activity Posted by the Teacher on Edmodo

In Figure 9, the teacher posted a speaking activity on Edmodo. After teaching the students in the first meeting about "introducing yourself", he instructed them to practice and to record their speaking related that topic in a video and uploaded it to Edmodo. The minimum duration of video uploaded was three minutes and it was successful to reduce the amount of face-to-face meeting in the classroom and to increase the quantity of speaking practice.

After the students have submitted their assignments to Edmodo, the teacher could use the assessment feature provided by this website. Unlike the conventional way which the teacher has to bring the students' assignment papers when he/she want to assess, he can download and assess the students' works everywhere and every time only by bringing a computer or a smartphone and having an internet connection.

The teacher can download the attachment uploaded as the students' assignment which can be in the form of DOC, PDF, video, or mp3. After assessing it, she/he can input the students' score in the assessment dialogue box. The first box is used for the students' scores, and another box is for the maximum score.

Excerpt 11

"Bringing students' works paper is not efficient and it is not practical, I can assess everywhere and every time the students' assignment without those problems by using Edmodo."

The next flexibility strength of Edmodo is it supports the easier assessment. When assessing the students' speaking performance through Edmodo, the teacher can be more focus on every single word delivered by the students. It happens because the teacher can replay the video of students' speaking performance.

Excerpt 12

"by watching in the video, I can assess the students' performance carefully because I can replay it."

Figure 8. A Video of Students' Assignment

The last strength flexibility of Edmodo, it offers written corrective feedback about the students' speaking performance. Written corrective feedback is responses of a reader to a second language writer by showing that some users in the language productions do not obey to the rules of the target language (Solikhah, 2016).

Excerpt 13

"Besides giving the score, I also can write feedback to the students' assignment."

Direct feedback can be given after the students submitted online homework, quiz, and testing. The teacher writes notes about the students' assignment error and mistakes and they will be directly sent to the student's account.
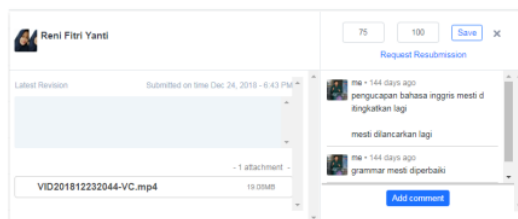

Figure 9. Teachers' Feedback about the Student's Work on Edmodo

4. CONCLUSION

The potentials of using Edmodo as e-learning on speaking activities based on the teacher's perception are its economy, privacy, simplicity, and flexibility. The challenges of using Edmodo as e-learning on speaking activities based on the teacher's perception are it is time-consuming, harm to the teacher's health, slow loading if lack of internet connection, the error of the system, easy for students to copy and paste their classmate's assignments.

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