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**FLIPPED LEARNING METHOD TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ENGLISH
SPEAKING SKILLS IN FORM 8**

DIPLOMA PAPER

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**APGRIEZTĀ MĀCĪBU METODE SKOLĒNU ANĢĻU VALODAS
RUNĀŠANAS PRASMJU PILNVEIDEI 8. KLASĒ**

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I declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged work from any source.

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the main skills to be developed throughout the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning process. Often due to limited learning time, students have few opportunities to practice their oral skills in class. Furthermore, some students don't feel confident enough to speak English during the lessons. The aim of the Diploma Paper was to examine how the flipped learning method can improve students' English speaking skills. The case study was chosen as the method of the research. The findings of the research indicated that Flipped learning method can be beneficial for students' speaking skills development. The students demonstrated better results, comparing to the conventional lesson and also expressed positive attitude towards the method.

Keywords: communicative competence, speaking skills, flipped learning, video.

ANOTĀCIJA

Runāšana ir viena no svarīgākām prasmēm, kas ir jāattīsta, angļu valodas, ka svešvalodas, mācīšanās laikā. Bieži, laika ierobežojuma dēļ, klasē skolēniem ir maz iespēju pielietot savas mutvārdu saziņas prasmes. Turklāt, daži skolēnu nejutās pietiekoši pašpārliecināti, lai runātu angļu valodā stundu laikā. Diplomdarba mērķis bija izpētīt, vai apgrieztā mācības metode var sekmēt skolēnu angļu valodas runāšanas prasmju pilnveidei. Par pētniecības metodi tika izvēlēta gadījuma izpētē. Pētījuma rezultāti norāda, ka apgrieztās mācības metode var labvēlīgi ietekmēt skolēnu runāšanas prasmju attīstību. Studenti demonstrēja labākos rezultātus, salīdzinot ar tradicionālo stundu, un arī izteica pozitīvo attieksmi, jautājumā par metodi.

Atslēgvārdi: komunikatīvā kompetence, runāšanas prasmes, apgrieztā mācība, video.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the four basic language skills together with listening, reading and writing. However, many students during their learning process suffer from lack of confidence and are anxious to speak. On the other hand, many EFL teachers complain about such a phenomenon as classroom silence: their students refuse to participate in oral activities, but still show readiness to do other tasks, which include, for instance, writing. This experience might be frustrating for both teachers and students, and the situation might even lead to conflicts between them. However, development of speaking skills is a crucial part of the language learning process.

General education standards in Latvia are determined by the Cabinet of Ministers. According to the Rules of Procedures of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 468 (2014), the objective of the Foreign language subject is to develop learner's language, communicative and socio-cultural competence, by using foreign language during studies, communication and cooperation in the changing multicultural world.

Graduating from the 9th form, the learners are expected to reach B1 skill level.

English level B1 is the third level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), defined by the Council of Europe.

According to the official CEFR (2001) guidelines, someone at the B1 level in English:

- 'Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
- Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.
- Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.
- Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans' (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Common Reference levels, 2001).

The speaker of this level 'can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production' (CEFR Qualitative aspects of spoken language use, 2001).

Overall it means that graduates from the ninth form are expected to reach intermediate level in all language aspects, including speaking.

However, often due to limited learning time, students have few opportunities to practice their oral skills in class. This study's aim was to explore whether flipped learning approach methods can be helpful in these circumstances.

According to the non-profit online community for educators Flipped Learning Network (FLN), 'Flipped Learning is a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter' (Definition of Flipped Learning, 2014). The name was introduced by chemistry teachers Bergman and Sams in the 2000s. However, they emphasize that they "do not own the term", therefore every teacher might adjust the model, according to their own needs (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, p. 6).

However, it might have some limitations. Some issues might occur due to students' perception, motivation and ability to study independently. Besides, there might be some technical issues, as long as the model requires digital skills from both sides (as teachers, as students).

Concerning students, nowadays school pupils are considered to be digital natives. This term was introduced by education consultant Prensky in his 2001 article entitled 'Digital Natives', and it refers to people who grow up in the digital age. The use of technological devices and digital skills development has become essential in the modern life. However, studies show that sometimes EFL learners do not fully use the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools in language learning. For instance, Kızıl (2017) discovered that a significant amount of the study participants had never used games in their educational activities, and were not aware of how to use Web 2.0 tools (blogs, wikis, podcasts and social networking sites) for their studies. The author implies that teachers should raise students' awareness about the possibilities of using ICT tools.

On the 31 of May 2018, the Saeima's (Latvian parliament) committee on education, culture and science approved implementation of the new competency-based instructional content starting from school year 2019/2020. In the upcoming education standards, the Foreign language curriculum contains also development of a variety of digital skills. For example, it is expected from the learners that they are able to choose from the digital environment texts, according to their needs and interests; they should assess the information reliability and be able quote the source of information. The students need to be able to find the material, required for the task independently. They should be able to share their texts and opinions online and be responsible for the content they publish. They should be able to produce their own audio and video material (Competence-based approach in education, 2016).

The **aim** of this Diploma Paper was to examine how the methods of flipped learning approach and ICT tools usage can facilitate EFL learners' speaking skills development in form 8 during English language lessons at Riga Innova Private Secondary School.

The author of the paper brought forward the hypothesis that 'flipped learning methods can help to develop learners' speaking skills.

To achieve the aim of the Paper the following objectives were set:

1) review and analyze literature on communicative competence, speaking skills, flipped learning and its application in English language lessons;

2) to carry out a self-evaluation interview for the students to detect their attitude to speaking activities; to find out, whether they feel motivated and confident to speak English, if not, what might be the limiting factors.

3) to design series of lessons, using flipped learning methods and ICT tools, focusing on speaking and communicative activities;

4) to carry out reflections after the lessons and tests, to measure students' achievement in speaking;

5) to carry out a posterior interview, to detect, whether students feel more confident in their speaking performance and whether students find flipped learning methods and ICT tools helpful in EFL learning.

To reach the aim of the Diploma Paper, the author concentrates on the following **research questions**:

1) how communicative competence can be developed;

2) what the students' attitude towards speaking activities is, whether they feel motivated and confident to speak English;

3) whether the flipped learning methods can facilitate students' speaking skills development.

For the purposes of the present research, the author of the Diploma Paper chose the case study method. The research was carried out at Riga Private Secondary School Innova in the period from October till December 2018. 4 students of 8 Form took part in the case study.

The data of the study were collected from the set of semi-structured interviews, speaking tests and reflections after the lessons. Speaking skills were tested, according to the year 2018 9th form examination checklist (see Appendix 1).

The present paper consists of introduction, 3 chapters, conclusion, theses and appendices.

Outline of the chapters:

Chapter 1 focuses on the notion of communicative competence and describes how it can be developed;

Chapter 2 describes the flipped learning approach, its application conditions, possible limitations and possible effects on the speaking skills' development;

Chapter 3 describes the process and results of the case study implication in Riga Private Secondary School Innova 8th Grade.

1. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

1.2 THE NOTION OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, communication is ‘a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior’.

Communicative competence is a term introduced by Hymes in 1966. Hymes considered that only grammar is not enough for successful communication. In order to communicate effectively, we need to have the possibility to produce and interpret one’s cultural behavior. There are ‘rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless’ and these rules must be known for both – the speaker and the listener. (Hymes, 1972).

Canale (1983), in his turn, provides a definition of communication as:

‘The exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individuals through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written/visual modes, and production and comprehension processes.’

He characterizes communication as a form of social interaction which involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity, takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts that constrain appropriate language use. It is limited by psychological constraints. It has to have a purpose, it involves authentic language and it is judged as successful or not by the achievement of the communicative purpose.

Canale emphasizes difference between communicative competence, as knowledge, how to use the rules of communication, and actual communication - the use of this knowledge in real acts of communication. He outlines four major components of communicative competence:

- grammatical competence, which contains knowledge of vocabulary, rules of word and sentence formation, linguistic semantics, pronunciation and spelling;
- sociolinguistic competence, including rules of appropriateness of both meanings (allowable messages) and grammatical forms in different sociolinguistic contexts;
- discourse competence, the knowledge required to combine forms and meanings to achieve unified spoken or written texts;
- and strategic competence, knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called upon to compensate for limitations in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence. (Canale, 1983)

These dimensions of communication, Canale argues, are essential both for a theoretical understanding of communication and as a basis for practical application to language pedagogy.

They suggest dimensions which must be included at the level of syllabus (the choice of linguistic content in language teaching) and procedures and techniques which are appropriate teaching strategies.

Brown (1987) gives a definition of communicative competence as ‘that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings within specific contexts’. (As cited in Swan, 2007).

According to Nunan (1999, p. 226), communicative competence consists of several elements: knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary; knowledge of rules of speaking (how to begin and end conversations, what topics can be talked about in different types of speech events with different people etc.); knowing how to use and respond to different types of speech acts such as requests, apologies, thanks, and invitations; and knowing how to use language appropriately.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR or CEF or CEFRL), created by the Council of Europe as the main part of the project "Language Learning for European Citizenship", sets up systems of validation of language ability.

It distinguishes between four kinds of language activities: reception (listening and reading), production (spoken and written), interaction (spoken and written), and mediation (translating and interpreting) in four broad domains: educational, occupational, public, and personal.

According to CEFR, a language user can develop various degrees of competence in each of these domains and to help describe them, the CEFR has provided a set of six Common Reference Levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2).

According to scale, the level B1, which Latvian students are expected to reach by graduating from the 9th form (Rules of Procedures of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 468, 2014), includes speaking skills as follows:

Table 1.1. CEFR Common Reference levels

B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
	Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.
	Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.
	Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

To summarize, the author of this study understands the term communication as an exchange of information between individuals in verbal, non-verbal, oral or written ways with the purpose to be understood. Communicative competence is understood as knowing, how to apply language knowledge in communication.

1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

One of the traditional ways to develop communicative competence is the communicative approach or Communicative language teaching (CLT).

According to Richards (Richards, 2006, p. 13) the basic principles of CLT are:

- Making real communication the focus of language learning;
- Providing opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know;
- Being tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence;
- Providing opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency;
- Linking the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world;
- Letting students induce or discover grammar rules.

He offers a set of activities to develop communication skills:

- information-gap activities, and he reminds that in real communication, people also communicate in order to get information they do not possess,
- jigsaw activities, also based on the information-gap principle,
- task-completion activities: puzzles, games, map-reading,
- information-gathering activities: surveys, interviews, and searches,
- opinion-sharing activities, when students compare values, opinions, or beliefs, such as a ranking task,
- information-transfer activities, when students take information that is presented in one form and represent it in a different form,
- reasoning-gap activities, which involve deriving some new information from given information through the process of inference.

Speaking about the basic techniques and materials of CLT Larsen-Freeman (2000, pp. 132-134) identifies the following set: “authentic materials”, “language games”, “role play”.

However, Broughton et al. (1980) point out that teachers tend to put emphasis on a very limited range of competence which has been called ‘classroom English’ or ‘textbook English’, and often has little use in the real-life communication situations.

This is the reason why it is important to make sure that students have an opportunity to express themselves in speech or in writing in a variety of contexts.

Riddell (2014), describing speaking lesson, also emphasizes what ‘speaking is not’ and gives the examples of the activities, which do not develop speaking skills: reading aloud (which is meant for pronunciation); reading the answer to a grammar question (to develop accuracy); reading the answer to a reading/listening question (comprehension). These activities are not ‘Speaking-related’. Instead he offers several types of speaking-related activities: ranking (putting items in a particular order), debates, surveys/questionnaires, prepared by students, describing visuals, role plays, discussion on topics of interest.

All the scholars and researchers emphasize that teachers should be careful with the fluency/accuracy balance. Error correction must be delicate and not interrupt students’ performance.

Patil (2008) argued that the teacher’s priority duty is to build up students’ confidence and eliminate fear of making errors to make them feel comfortable with their language use.

Lawtie (2004) for the British Council website identifies some typical classroom problems: students don't talk or say anything. The reason might be cultural, or students feel too shy. Students should receive encouragement to speak, for example, a positive feedback. But they might keep silent because the class activities are boring or are not suitable for their level.

She also encourages teachers to speak English in class as much as possible. It reinforces both teachers’ and students’ confidence.

Sometimes students just start speaking their own language while working in pairs or groups. Teacher should remind them about importance of speaking in the target language; make sure, the timing of the task is planned properly; discuss the issue with the particular student, if necessary.

On the contrary, sometimes, when all the students speak together, the teacher feels like they are losing control of the class. The author reminds that if the class suddenly becomes student-centered and not teacher centered, it is exactly what is needed.

Overall, as can be seen from this chapter, it is important to develop students’ ability to apply language knowledge in communication, in order to successfully take part in acts of communication.

There are several ways to develop communication skills: information-gap activities, jigsaw activities, puzzles, games, surveys, interviews, searches, opinion-sharing activities etc. Authentic materials are also helpful in this process.

Sometimes students don't feel confident to start to speak. In order to help them, the teacher should give them positive feedback and be tolerant to mistakes.

2. FLIPPED LEARNING

2.1 DEFINITION AND HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT

Flipped learning is an approach that was introduced by Bergmann and Sams, who taught chemistry classes at a high school in the U.S. The core idea was to assign their students as homework to watch a video explanation of the syllabus before the lesson, in order to create more helpful syllabus. After that class, they found that class time could be used for more engaging activities, labs and problem solving. In addition, students discovered that videos could be re-watched as many times as needed for better understanding. The model was more efficient than lecturing and giving home assignments. (Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

The governing board and key leaders of the non-profit online community for educators Flipped Learning Network (FLN) in 2014 announced a formal definition of the term:

‘Flipped Learning is a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter’ (Definition of Flipped Learning, 2014).

Muzyka and Luker in the book “The flipped Classroom Volume 1: Background and Challenges” (2016) emphasize that ‘the flipped classroom is a high-tech variation on a pedagogical method that has been around for generations’. They mention that even in Socratic method instructors encouraged students to discover the connections between ideas, by asking the students questions. Muzyka and Luker also compare flipped classroom to the Thayer method, used at the United States Military Academy since the early 1800’s. In this method students were expected to take responsibility for their own learning by studying material before it is covered in class. Besides, some other educationists tried to implement approaches of active learning in classrooms.

Morrison and Boyd’s Organic Chemistry textbook was published in 1959, and, as Morrison explained later, the book was based on their transcribed lectures. (Morrison, 1986). ‘It seemed ridiculous to go into class and simply repeat what was already available in the book’, - he said. He met Lambert who told him about an approach called “the Gutenberg Method”. This method of teaching was named after the printing press inventor. The idea of the method was to assign the students to read the material from the textbook and study it before the class. When class met, the students were prepared with questions and could take part in the meaningful discussion. (Morrison, 1986).

Audio and videotapes of lectures were being used in courses starting from 1970 (Muzyka & Luker, 2016).

Flipped learning might be considered as a part of the active learning, ‘a method of learning in which students are actively or experientially involved in the learning process’. (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

In 1995, Wesley Baker flipped his communications course with the help of PowerPoint. He posted the presentations on the Cedarville College network. Baker named his approach ‘The Classroom Flip’ and described it at a conference in 2000. The approach already included main points of the flipped learning: online delivery of the lectures, discussions in the class, more time for practice (Figure 1.1.)



Figure 1.1. A slide from the presentation ‘The Classroom Flip: Becoming the Guide by the Side’ by J. Wesley Baker, Ph.D. Department of Communication Arts, Cedarville College FIHE/UPS Effective Practice Fellow, Ameritech Faculty Development Technology Program, June 23, 2000.

The term ‘flipped learning’ became popular in 2012 after the publication of Bergman and Sams’ book *Flip your classroom: reach every student in every class every day* (Muzyka & Luker, 2016).

Overall, flipped learning can be considered a modern version of the previous active learning strategies, combined with technology such as videos or online quizzes. The main feature of the approach is that students are assigned to watch videos before classes.

2.2 BENEFITS OF THE FLIPPED LEARNING

Non-profit online community for educators Flipped Learning Network, initiated in 2012 by the pioneers of the approach, including Bergmann, Sams, Gudenrath, Daniels, Cockrum, Bennett and others, brings into focus the learner-centered features of this method. According to this community, one of the major benefits of this approach is dedication of in-class time to exploring topics in depth and increasing learning opportunities. As a result, there is more time for developing conceptual understanding for the students.

As Bergmann and Sams (2012, p. 17) point that in this approach the teacher is becoming an expert who provides competent feedback, whereas students are expected to watch the videos and ask appropriate questions. Teachers' role changes from information delivery to helping students.

Bergmann, Overmyer and Wilie (2013) in their article 'The Flipped Class: Myths vs. Reality' also consider that the flipped learning model provides opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning and receive more personalized syllabus.

Jarvis et al. (2014) consider that flipped learning can be a helpful tool for students in co-creating the context of learning with the instructor and peers. For example, students can participate in the creation of the assessment, determining topics; they also can take part in the evaluation of the assessment, making self or peer reviews. Besides, students are encouraged to influence the learning process, by contributing their own experience and materials in the class.

It is also worth mentioning, that flipped learning approach helps to personalize learning in large groups (Bergman & Sams, 2012, p. 6). It is difficult to adapt course materials, for example, in the group of 150 students. However, with the help of flipped learning, students can adjust to the syllabus on their own.

Bergman and Sams (2012) also mention that instructions, given before the lesson, help those students who are absent due to illness or other reasons not to get left behind. Learners can access the videos at any time they need, and they can pause and rewind them if necessary. For that reason, they can learn at their own pace and the learning process adapts better to their individual needs (Basal, 2015). What is more, the freed up in-class time allows the teacher to give struggling students ample attention and assessment because there is extra time to work with them (Bueno-Alastuey & Galar, 2017).

Flipping might be helpful for struggling students (Bergman & Sams, 2012, p. 23) in that way that they do not have to sit passively and wait, while the students, who already know the answer, raised their hands and answered the question. Listening to the conversation of the top students with the teacher might be frustrating and demotivating for those students who are not so successful at the moment. Flipped learning can help to distribute teacher's attention more evenly within the class. As a result, even struggling students have their chance to excel.

Students' perception towards the model was tested in several studies. For example, in the work of Evseeva and Solozhenko (2015) at a Russian technical university, the authors tested the English language students' attitude towards the model. Most of the students (85%) rated the model positively. However, 15% of them claimed to have had difficulties with it. The respondents mentioned issues with Internet access, lack of time for completing online assignments, and difficulty with self-discipline, because they struggled to organize the work properly. As one of the major advantages of the course generality of the students (98%) mentioned the availability of the e-learning materials as. 75% of respondents were satisfied with the opportunities for collaboration and communication in the e-learning environment. The teachers as the benefits of the model pointed out the flexible timetable and involvement of students in the learning process. Moreover, the results of the survey showed the improvement of students' academic performance. Despite the technical problems, the researchers acknowledged increase of students' academic performance.

Basal (2015) in his research tested students' opinions about the flipped classroom in an EFL class at a university in Turkey. The flipped model was applied for 47 students for two semesters. As benefits, the participants mentioned ability to learning at one's own pace, advanced student preparation, overcoming the limitations of class time, and increasing participation. However, some problems were detected such as students not watching the videos or students complaining about the length of the videos. (See in detail below).

Hung (2015) implemented the flipped classroom strategy in an EFL class at a Taiwanese university. She examined the possible impact of the flipped model on learners' academic performance, learning attitudes and participation levels. Students in the experimental group showed improvements in oral and writing production compared to the control group. Results also showed that students in the flipped classroom model engaged in deep learning. Moreover, that learners demonstrated higher levels of satisfaction than their peers from the traditional classroom.

Sung (2015) in a college class in Korea also examined students' perception towards the flipped learning classes. At the end of the course students rated this model of teaching very highly (97.17 out of 100 points). The participants appreciated the materials such as the videos,

PPT files and relevant supplementary articles or materials related to course contents. However, one student complained about the amount of home assignments and another was not satisfied with the definition of the projector screen during the presentations in class.

Sometimes students' attitude changes during the course. Webb, Doman, and Pusey (2014) used flipped teaching model in high-intermediate EFL university classes. They were using YouTube videos, TED Talks, or teacher- and student-crafted videos, discussion on Moodle (LMS), online quizzes. Through surveys, 88.7% preferred in-class teacher instruction rather than teacher-lectured videos which didn't agree with the flipped classroom goals. 73.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with preferences of watching videos as pre-class in 7th weeks of the study. But in 14th weeks the ratio lowered to 15%, 68.2% showed positive attitudes towards Moodle, and 73.7% wanted more pre-class instruction in the end.

Kang (2015) tested the flipped model for 24 Korean university students in a general English course. The results displayed that the flipped classroom showed statistically significant increases in total English knowledge, grammar knowledge and vocabulary knowledge. Unfortunately, the author reports that the data of the traditional class was corrupted, as a result it was not possible to compare the outcome. At the end of the course students considered the flipped classroom were highly satisfied and found the curriculum helpful. The students in this research agreed or strongly agreed that the flipped assignments were more helpful for their grammar ability (78.3%), listening ability (73.95), and vocabulary knowledge (60.8%) as compared to the regular classroom (34.8%, 39.1% & 30.45%) and easier way to follow assignments (78.2% & 69.2%) and class materials (91.3%). These positive responses together with the achievement and engagement enhancing show how potentially effective the flipped learning model implementation can be. The author suggests flipping not only grammar- and vocabulary classes, but also discussion- and writing-skills based courses.

2.3 CRITICISM OF THE MODEL

Some researchers also show skepticism about the method and point out some issues of the flipped learning. For example, Zwaagstra (2013) emphasizes that an experienced teacher with greater expertise in the subject area is always better than most video lectures, especially when these teachers have good pedagogical and communicative skills to cover content and interact with students meaningfully. In his opinion, technological convenience alone does not guarantee the effectiveness of lectures in many cases. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine that most secondary schools could start running all the classes in a flipped manner. It could cause many complexities for both teachers and students who have to prepare or watch many videos.

Zwaagstra mentions that there are situations when the flipped classroom should be applied out of necessity. For example, when other methods are limited in use or if videos can provide better instruction than the textbooks or available teachers.

He also mentions a pilot project in Nova Scotia where free tablets were provided to approximately 300 grade 7 students. One of the purposes behind this project was to enable students to access math videos from the Khan Academy's website'. However, the Nova Scotia pilot tablet program was cancelled after in a year due to no evidence of improvements in students' performance.

As a matter of fact, Bergmann, Overmyer and Wilie (2011) emphasize that the flipped class is not all about the videos or courses offered online only but that there should be meaningful interaction through activities individually or in group in class.

Students might feel frustrated when left with the unfamiliar information alone. Sung (2015) quotes a Filipino student who expressed the struggles during the class:

'It is tough especially because the amount of reading is a lot. And another is that, I am receiving a lot of information which sometimes I couldn't deal with it. Receiving a lot of unfamiliar information for a short of time was burdensome to me and I felt the need of some more time understanding them one by one. I do admit that this way of learning is effective but to be honest, due to my personal condition, it was hard for me to cope up in this class (like submitting assignments on time or reading all the chapters carefully)'.

Another student of this study also complained about not being able to understand or translate some parts of the materials. According to their complaints, sometimes a lecture is more helpful.

Basal (2015) in his research also mentioned some problems with the students he faced during the first semester of work by this model. For example, some students did not watch video at home. To make sure, they watched videos at home, he used some secret words in different segments of the videos, and students were asked to provide these words in class.

He also mentions that students complained about the late delivery of videos. In response to this claim he started to post videos were posted at least four days before class lesson.

After students complains about the length of the videos, the educator limited the videos length to 15 minutes.

Sung (2015) also quotes the student, who struggled with home assignments:

'I had to watch the video during the class because I did not do so in advance, which I was supposed to do. I didn't not do the assignment not because I didn't want to do it but understood it wrong. It sounds like an excuse, but I thought I had to watch two episodes by Thursday this week. I thought about why this happened and realized that I have not caught up with the style

of this course yet. No matter what reasons there may be, I, due to my misunderstanding, could not participate in the discussion and listen to important themes and issues on the topic. I have to concentrate a bit more for sure’.

This demonstrates how important it is to persuade students to cooperate and prepare in advance for this model to work.

Sometimes students’ age might be a limitation in using the model. Hao (2016) analyzed learners’ readiness to the flipped classroom model at a 7th grade EFL class in a Taiwanese middle school. His study surveyed 387 7th graders. The study showed that the technology self-efficacy was not the limitation, but some students did not feel motivated when it came to self-directed learning and also the in-class communication efficacy showed the second lowest readiness levels. The researcher assumed that the reason might be that the participants were used to teacher-centered methods. The author suggests for teachers to initiate flipped learning step-by-step, convincing students of their proficiency, competency, and showing empathy with their students to increase readiness levels.

Many educators are concerned about whether everything can be taught online. Indeed, some materials and concepts are too complex to be taught just via video. However, it is emphasized that not all lectures should be flipped and that some traditional lectures should be maintained (Zappe, Leicht, Messner, Litzinger & Lee, 2009, p. 2). flipped classroom is not the same as online lecture. In-class time should and needs to be dedicated to explaining students what is unclear.

Some teachers express hesitation that the production of the materials (especially taking videos) is too time-consuming. At the same time, they find using other teachers’ videos unethical.

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Some teachers are anxious about breaking the copyright, because the legislation seems to them unclear, besides, it is hard to define, what is permitted, especially in digital and online contexts.

Scholars and educators give some advice to implement flipped learning in the classes.

Some authors, for instance Bergman and Sams (2012), Correa (2015), Muzyka and Luker (2016) note that not preparing for the lesson in the flipped learning approach are similar to the traditional - if students don't do their part, they perform poorly in the course. The students should be reminded about that. They also recommend giving students take-home quizzes of 10-20 questions after each unit. The answers should be in the given video. In the science lessons, some mini-labs might be added to the course. These authors suggest not to exclude traditional lectures from the course to explain some more complex topics and exchange ideas and questions.

Sometimes learners might not have internet access due to different reasons. This is the alternative for those students are needed. They need to be explained, where can they find computer and internet. For instance, in the school library or directly in the class. Besides, as Muzyka and Luker (2016) point out that materials can also be copied to a USB flash drive and given to the students.

2.6 SPEAKING SKILLS' DEVELOPMENT, USING THE FLIPPED LEARNING

Much of flipped learning model implementation research focused on teaching content subjects. In addition, some studies were also conducted to examine the effects of a flipped model on English speaking performance.

Some studies show the effectiveness of the flipped learning approach for enhancing students' oral proficiency. For example, the results of Chen Hsieh, Huang, and Wu's (2017) studies revealed that the students were satisfied with the flipped classroom, accepted the technology, and were motivated by the incorporation of mobile learning. The findings of this research were that the students, taught based on the flipped learning approach, had better learning outcomes and attitude for active and continuous learning than those learning with the conventional lecture-based approach.

The goal of their study was to improve the ability of students to use idioms. The authors used the smartphone app LINE to reach that goal, because the students in the study were highly familiar with the app, it can to make records, send teself-xt messages individually and in groups, and it is cross platform (compliant with Android, iOS, tablets, and PCs). The participants (42

sophomores ages of 20 and 21 from one of the Taiwan university) were at the upper-intermediate level in terms of their English proficiency.

The data of this study revealed that the flipped oral instruction not only engaged the students more in the learning tasks but also enhanced the participants' overall oral proficiency, compared to conventional instruction. Most of the students in this study acknowledged increase motivation and pointed out that flipped instruction was a beneficial alternative to the traditional approach.

One student responded that flipped instruction relieved her tension and helped her gain confidence in communicating with peers in English. Another student noted that, 'Repeated preview of the contents at home in advance helps me to express myself better in class, because I know more in hand compared with traditional teaching styles.' (Chen Hsieh, Huang & Wu, 2017) Some students mentioned that they were more motivated during flipped learning, because they were able to use what they have learned beforehand in class discussions. However, one student noted that "It takes me more time to finish the tasks before attending the class. But it is very rewarding because the learning tasks help me prepare for deeper in-class learning." Some other students found the flipped instruction to be very challenging for them.

Lin and Hwang (2018) used social networking site Facebook for their online community-based flipped learning study. In their work, teacher selected educational videos related to the target language from TED, VoiceTube, and YouTube were uploaded to the wall in Facebook. The group of 33 Taiwanese students could view one or two videos each week in the newsfeed and respond to the designed open questions related to the video in comments area. If they did not complete the out-of-class learning and assignments on the newsfeed, they were asked to complete it before the lecture. The final task for students was to record their own dialogues (via live stream Facebook tool) and share their videos. In addition, they could comment their peer videos and get others' feedback on their own videos immediately.

The authors compared performance of the experimental group and the control group and concluded that the online community-based flipped classroom scores were higher than the conventional video-based learning classroom scores.

Quyen and Loi (2018) examined the flipped learning model on 60 undergraduate 19-21 aged students at Can Tho University. According to the authors, the participants English proficiency ranged from the upper elementary to pre-intermediate level. The data of the study were collected from pre and post speaking tests, questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The assessment criteria involved pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, content, and fluency. The researchers also used videos and reading material, uploaded on Facebook network. The videos contained conversations, vocabulary and some grammar explanations.

The speaking performance of both controlled and experimental groups showed improvements. However, in the control group the increase was of nearly 6 points, but in the experimental group - up to nearly 20 points. Regarding perception, 70% of the participants in the questionnaire reported satisfaction with the flipped learning model.

In the interview part the students asserted its effectiveness in enhancing their vocabularies related to the topics, getting them familiar with native speakers' pronunciation and intonation. However, some students complained about the fast speed of the talk with the speakers' reduction of sounds caused them difficulties in understanding the content. They also suggested English subtitles should be provided so that it would be easier for them to understand the materials.

Overall, based on the previous analysis, it is quite within reason to suggest that the flipped learning model can help to increase class time for oral practice and promote students' speaking skills.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FLIPPED LEARNING

As it has previously been mentioned, communication is one of the basic forms of social interaction and students' communicative competence development is one of the crucially important aspects in their learning process.

The **aim** of the case study was to examine, whether flipped learning method can help to improve students' speaking performance.

In order to reach the aim of the case study, the following steps were made:

1. An interview to establish students' attitude towards speaking activities, their evaluation of own speaking performance and what they saw as a limitation to preferences;

2. Analysis of the students' speaking performance before the implementation of the flipped learning method;

3. Implementation of the flipped classroom method and reflections after the lessons to measure students' willingness to participate in speaking activities,

4. Evaluation of the students' speaking performance after each lesson;

5. Final interview to detect students' attitude towards their speaking performance, progress and their opinion about the method.

The research took place in the 8th Grade of Riga Innova Private Secondary School from October till December 2018. There were four students participating in the case study: 1 girl and 3 boys, all at the age of 14.

The small size of the sample group let the author observe each student during every lesson. Furthermore, it gave the author an opportunity to change tasks meeting the interests of each student. It, in author's opinion, helped to create more student-centered rather than teacher-centered curriculum.

The author had not previously worked in this school, she started in September 2018 as a part of the practice.

3.1 ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS SPEAKING PERFORMANCE BEFORE IMPLEMENTING FLIPPED LEARNING

Based upon the author's observations made in the lessons before introducing the flipped learning method into the classes, it was hard to attribute the speaking skills to the strengths of any of the participants in the studied group.

If to analyze their oral performance in accordance with the exam requirements of the 9th grade, their performance could hardly be rated higher than 1 point in all parameters, despite the fact that the results of their written work and knowledge of grammar rules were much higher.

While trying to tell anything, the students either ceased speaking or quickly switched to their native language, avoiding communication in English. Their phrases in the target language sounded ragged, they rarely were constructed grammatically correctly. As soon as they started talking, they quickly fell silent.

Students' speaking performance in the traditional lesson, according to the 9th grade exam criteria (see Appendix 1) was as follows:

Table 3.1. Students' speaking activity assessment during the traditional lesson

Students	Task achievement	Interaction	Accuracy	Fluency	Total
I.	0	0	0	0	0
L.	0	0	0	0	0
P.	0	0	0	0	0
Y.	2	2	2	3	9

It is worth mentioning that the students willingly performed written assignments, including assignments after listening to texts. Some types of oral tasks, for example, translation of texts and sentences, responding to multiple choice questions, etc., also did not cause difficulties.

As for the tasks, concerning speaking, the students even asked to replace them with written assignments or even a test.

"It is better to write 10 written assignments or a test than to speak about something," the student Y commented their lack of desire to respond in one of the lessons.

The student P. in one of the lessons, as it can be assumed as a joke, hid under a desk, when the author asked her to answer an oral task.

Even a task of repeating pre-prepared phrases out loud after a speaker on a recording clearly caused stress and difficulties to the students. The author in this case tried to encourage the students to perform the oral task, however was confronted with the occurrence of 'classroom silence', as it was described above. At the same time, the author experienced frustrating feelings due to inability to comprehend how to elicit voices from the students.

The author reminded the students that pretty soon they would face such a challenge as the exam in the 9th grade, when they would still have to perform an oral task. It was better to prepare

for it in advance, in less stressful circumstances. However, received the answer that there was still a lot of time ahead (“It will only be in the 9th grade,” student Y.).

It is also worth mentioning that the students almost always did their homework, but sometimes they came unprepared. In this regard, the author of the study had concerns about the introduction of the flipped learning. When this method was tested as a sample (the students received assignments to go through an online test using e-mail), this experience could not be considered a success.

The student P. in the next lesson reported that she could not remember the password from the e-mail, the student Y. said that he could not open the link, the student L. said that he did not understand what to do, the student I. asked to give him assignments on paper format.

3.2 ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS SPEAKING ACTIVITIES BEFORE IMPLEMENTING FLIPPED LEARNING

In order to find out how the students themselves evaluated their speaking skills and what they considered to be the limiting factors, the author conducted an interview.

The students rated their speaking skills as average and good. They called grammar as the main problem.

I.: “My conversational English is good, I can speak, but grammar is not”.

Y.: “I think that I do not speak very well, more or less, but things are worse with grammar.”

P.: “The same thing, I speak normally, but there is a lack of grammar.”

L.: “And I have the same issue.”

When asked whether they really believed that they lacked only grammar, the students once again firmly confirmed their opinion.

I. added: “I am good at speaking and reading, writing is worse, but there is absolutely no grammar”.

When asked whether the students thought that the problem could partially hide in the absence of self-confidence, they answered that it was possible.

I. confirmed: "I really lack self-confidence."

Y. added: "We need to talk more, I rarely speak."

The author also asked whether the students had an opportunity to speak English outside of school. They replied that they did not.

When asked where they used the knowledge of English in addition to school, the students answered that they watched movies and listened to songs.

The author asked whether the students believed that oral tasks, for example, acting out dialogues would help them improve their speaking skills. The students replied that they most probably did not.

P.: “Now I would not like to. Perhaps, if it could be possible to prepare.”

When asked, whether they thought that speaking tasks at home would improve their speaking skills, all the students answered positively. However, the author reminded them that sometimes they had not done their homework.

I.: “These were written homework assignments, but we would do oral ones”.

The rest confirmed that they were ready to perform oral homework and saw them as a benefit to improve their speaking skills.

The author also asked whether the students believed that videos, for example, on Youtube.com could help them improve their speaking skills. The students firmly answered - no.

P.: “They speak too quickly and incomprehensibly”.

I.: “If there are subtitles, otherwise no. Nothing is understandable”.

The author tried to find out whether the students knew about such features of the sites like Youtube.com as to slow down the playback speed or enable subtitles (in some videos). The students answered that they did not know about them.

3.3 ANALYSIS OF THE LESSONS WITH FLIPPED LEARNING METHOD

After that, the author began the phase of the lesson in the Flipped Learning format.

After the failure with the e-mail described in the chapter 3.2, the author agreed with the students that they would create a group in WhatsApp application. Ever since the students received assignments and instructions, as well as links to videos, in the WhatsApp group. Communication with the help of this application was successful: all the participants had already installed this application, everyone knew how to use it, there never was any problem with not receiving any message. Furthermore, chat communication could help solve problems immediately, if such arose.

LESSON 1

As the first assignment, the author asked the students to watch a video about the history of the Halloween holiday (an episode of a TV show from National Geographic TV channel,

length 3:09). In addition, the students had to prepare 5 questions about the video to ask their group mates (see Appendix 2).

As it turned out in the lesson, only 3 out of 4 students had watched the video in advance. Therefore, it was necessary to watch the video also in the classroom. None of the students had prepared questions as the task required.

I. said he did not understand anything, because there were too many incomprehensible words, and the announcers spoke too quickly.

Y. and L. said they watched the video together and understood almost everything.

P. did not watch the video.

While watching during the class, the author showed how to activate subtitles in the video. After that, all the students agreed that it became much clearer.

The author asked her 10 questions about this video. The students tried to answer in English, but periodically still switched to their native language.

Students' speaking performance in the first flipped lesson, according to the 9th grade exam criteria (see Appendix 1) was as follows:

Table 3.2. Students' speaking evaluation at the first flipped lesson.

Students	Task achievement	Interaction	Accuracy	Fluency	Total
I.	2	2	1	3	8
L.	2	2	2	3	9
P.	2	1	2	3	8
Y.	2	2	2	3	10

LESSON 2

For the next lesson, the students received the following task: to find a video that tells about a person with an interesting, in their opinion, profession or job and show it in the class to their mates (see Appendix 3). Duration of the video shall not exceed 3 minutes (if the video is longer, choose the most appropriate episode).

When the group gathered for this lesson it turned out that there was no Internet in the entire school for 24 hours. Some researchers (for example, Muzyka and Luker, Evseeva and Solozhenko) warned that sometimes there may be obstacles to conducting flipped lessons due

to lack of Internet. In this case, it was suggested to save materials in offline mode, for example, on a USB-drive.

In this particular case, the students were not ready for it, so it was necessary to postpone the lesson, and on this day to hold a traditional class.

By the next day, the communication at the school was resumed and the author along with the students was able to conduct the planned class. In this case, the author would like to mention that the class turned out to be absolutely run by the students, which confirms the words of the authors of the flipped learning Bergman and Sams that it is a student-centered rather than teacher-centered approach.

The students chose the following characters as the heroes to demonstrate in the class:

I. – American rapper, singer, songwriter Lil Pump

L. - Queen of the United Kingdom Elizabeth II

P. - President of the US Donald Trump

Y. - Swedish YouTuber, comedian PewDiePie

This time in the class, due to different themes and characters, there was touched upon an extensive vocabulary from different spheres of life. For example, the students did not know what was *collaboration* mentioned in the video about the creative development of Lil Pump. The author explained that it meant “working with someone to produce something”, then asked the class to recall examples of other collaboration from music they knew.

After watching the video about the biography of Donald Trump, in particular, the question arose what was a *developer* and what he did in construction.

While watching a video about PewDiePie, we discussed the vocabulary related to video blogging, for example, the students did not know what *footage* was.

While watching a video about Elizabeth II, the author drew the attention of the students to the aspect that the accent of the speakers changed (in the previous videos there was the American accent, and in this one - the British pronunciation). The student, who chose this character to prepare for the class admitted that he took it because he had heard that the queen celebrated her birthday twice a year. He wanted to find out how it was possible, but he did not get an answer from this specific video. However, he was too lazy to look for another video, so he stopped at this one.

As a part of the class, the author allowed the students to use their mobile devices in order to find out the answer to this question using a browser. The students did it and the curiosity was satisfied.

After watching the video, the author began discussions with the students about what they thought about the people presented, whether they considered them successful, whether they regarded them as an example.

There was a discussion about what the chances of becoming a successful video blogger were, whether the students were ready to try themselves in this area, what they needed to do. It turned out that the work of a video blogger did not seem easy to anyone, the students said that they understood that the competition in this area was very high, and their earnings were not regular.

In general, the author assesses the class as very interesting, the students actively shared their opinion in English, although sometimes they switched to their native language or asked words they had forgotten.

The students' speaking evaluation after the second flipped lesson, according to the 9th grade exam criteria (see Appendix 1) is shown in the Table 3.3:

Table 3.3. Students' speaking evaluation in the second flipped lesson.

Students	Task achievement	Interaction	Accuracy	Fluency	Total
I.	2	2	2	3	9
L.	2	2	2	3	9
P.	2	2	2	3	8
Y.	2	2	2	4	10

LESSON 3

For the next lesson, the students got a task to watch a video of Richard St. John for TEDTalks "Secrets of success in 8 words, 3 minutes". John in this video says that he interviewed the most successful people of our time to find out which things they consider the most important for success. As components of success, he mentions: passion, work, being good at something, focus, pushing yourself, service (to others), ideas and persistence. The author asked the students also to think about what they considered to be the things that led to success (see Appendix 4).

This time one of the students returned from a trip abroad, so he explained that he could not have watched the video in advance. The others said that they had watched the video and there were no problems with understanding.

"Everything is very easy and understandable there," explained Y., the others agreed.

Nevertheless, the author showed the video in the classroom, afterwards offering to discuss the ideas from what was heard and share the students' own ideas.

First of all, the students' attention was drawn to the information in the video that a ticket for a TED conference cost \$ 4,000. The author offered to check it and use the Internet search. The students discovered that a ticket for TED in 2018 cost already \$ 6,000. (Thus, the flipped learning approach continued to demonstrate its focus on students, the lesson can be built so that students can get information they find interesting).

After that, the students began to express their opinion about what, in their opinion, led to success. They mentioned also the heroes of the previous lessons, for example, Y. believed that "it would be nice to be born in a rich family, like the king or Donald Trump. If the father and his inheritance did not help with the business, he would not have achieved so much. "

However, I. and L. spoke out in favour of the fact that by hard work and perseverance it was also possible to achieve success in life. L. also suggested an opinion that the tips from the video were more suitable for those, who wanted to do business.

"The main thing is motivation. If you really want something, you will definitely achieve it," so considered I.

P. also spoke in favour of the fact that sometimes luck is needed, not everyone is lucky to succeed.

L. also added that his father regularly sent him this kind of video, apparently as a hint of something.

In general, the author assesses the class positively, the students shared their views in English, participated in the discussions, although not as actively as in the previous lesson. Perhaps these tips from the video were not as close to them as the stories about the characters that they liked themselves and which they had chosen themselves. Therefore, the author concludes that in order to work more effectively in this system, it is better to try to do more student-centered lessons without imposing any opinion from outside, but to ask students to look for what interests them.

Regarding the speech component, sometimes during the discussion the students still switched to their native language or asked words that had forgotten, but tried to keep the discussion in English. Regarding the vocabulary, according to the author's observation, the word "*damn*" as an informal exclamation used by a speaker, caused the greatest reaction. The students tried to insert this word into different phrases. In addition, the word *self-doubt* caused interest. P. expressed an opinion that it looked and sounded weird. Everyone began to try to pronounce it.

After the discussion, the author invited the students to formulate their conclusions, how they saw the path to success. With the help of the author, it was possible to elicit the following theses: “We need to do what we like; to use various opportunities; not to be afraid to do something, including taking risks; the best of all is to have rich parents.

Students’ speaking performance during the third flipped lesson, according to the 9th grade exam criteria (Appendix 1) was as follows:

Table 3.4. Students’ speaking evaluation in the third flipped lesson

Students	Task achievement	Interaction	Accuracy	Fluency	Total
I.	2	1	2	3	8
L.	2	2	2	3	9
P.	2	1	2	3	8
Y.	2	2	2	4	10

LESSON 4

This lesson was based on the previous one, when the group discussed job ads, vocabulary related to work and how to submit a job application. The result of the previous lesson was the creation of an e-mail with a request to tell about the vacancy from the advertisement, as well as a short story about themselves, explaining why this person is suitable for this specific job.

For the next lesson, the author asked the students to “prepare for the interview” for their chosen work. As an example for the preparation, the author sent a video depicting an interview (see Appendix 5).

In the lesson, the author and the students acted out a role-play dialogue, when the author was an interviewer and the students were potential employees.

For themselves, they chose such roles:

I. – a volunteer at an animal shelter;

L. – a TV presenter;

P. – an art teacher in an Art club;

Y. - an employee in a cafe.

Since it was not a free act of speech, but prepared - the students had known in advance what questions they would have to answer and had prepared answers, the quality of their performance was better than usual. The main value of the lesson was that they continued to study work-related vocabulary and learned to put it into practice.

The students' speaking performance was assessed, as it is shown in the Table 3.5:

Table 3.5. Students' speaking evaluation in the fourth flipped lesson

Students	Task achievement	Interaction	Accuracy	Fluency	Total
I.	3	3	3	3	12
L.	3	3	3	3	12
P.	3	2	3	3	11
Y.	3	3	3	4	13

LESSON 5

For this lesson, the author asked the students to prepare a story about what they did in their free time. The author also emphasized that they had to convince their classmates that their way of recreation was the best. The author hoped for an exchange of views and discussion (see Appendix 6). However, it was not a complete success.

The students limited themselves to one or two phrases, talking about their leisure time. Based on their answers, in their free time they preferred to:

- I. - walk with the dog;
- L. - sleep or go out with friends;
- P. - draw;
- Y. - watch TV or play Playstation.

The author tried to get more detailed answers, but actually it was a failure. It was possible to find out that the breed of the dog belonging to I. was a golden retriever and he loved it very much. P. dreamt of becoming an artist, therefore she went in for drawing all her time. L. had a lot of friends, so he always had a company to go for a walk with. The author tried to get from him a story about interesting places for walks or events. However, he did not go into details. Y. just said that the best way to spend time was to lie on the couch and do nothing. When asked why, he answered: "Because you are lying and doing nothing!"

The students' speaking performance was assessed, as it is shown in the Table 3.6:

Table 3.6. Students' speaking evaluation in the fifth flipped lesson

Students	Task achievement	Interaction	Accuracy	Fluency	Total
I.	2	1	1	3	7
L.	2	2	2	3	9
P.	2	1	2	3	8
Y.	2	2	2	3	10

The author concludes that in order to get more detailed stories, it was necessary to offer some material for this work. For example - a video or text. In this case, the request turned out to be too abstract and, perhaps, the topic was not interesting enough for the students.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS SPEAKING ACTIVITIES AFTER IMPLEMENTING FLIPPED LEARNING

After several lessons taught, while applying the flipped learning method, the author conducted a final interview in order to find out how the attitude of the students towards speaking activities changed.

When asked whether the students considered such a class format (using video clips) to be interesting, everyone answered expressly - yes.

When asked whether they thought that such a format would improve their speaking skills, they expressed doubts.

Then author clarified whether the videos helped learn and memorize any new words. The students answered yes and began to list the words they remembered: success, footage, ignorant, persistent, some slang expressions like “damn”, “dumb stuff”.

When asked whether they felt more confident in speaking performance, the students' answers were “Maybe” and “Not sure”.

The author also asked whether they would like to continue this format of classes, using the videos, the students answered that they would.

When asked whether they thought that such classes would help them increase their confidence while speaking, the students also answered that it was “possible.”

In response to the question of what they saw as the main burden on the effectiveness of their speaking performance, this time they all answered - “vocabulary”.

The author asked if they had a richer vocabulary, whether they believed that they would become more efficient and confident in their speech. To this, the students responded that "it is possible" and "most likely."

The author also asked if they watched the videos in English in their free time. The students said they watched, including various video bloggers. P. mentioned that she learned that for some videos it was possible to enable subtitles and she used this feature.

3.5 ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS PROGRESS IN SPEAKING ACTIVITIES AFTER IMPLEMENTING FLIPPED LEARNING

Starting this research, author did not expect any significant improvements in the student's oral performance, due to the short time of the study. However, the students did show some improvements, especially, in comparison to the pre-study lesson.

In the first evaluated speaking-related lesson the score of the most students were around 0 (as it is displayed in the Table 3.1). The most common assessment was "Not enough to evaluate", which might be explained with the student's unwillingness to speak at all.

Only student Y. demonstrated wish to speak and his performance was evaluated with 9 points out of 20. (Table 3.1).

After implementing flipped lessons, students' speaking performance appreciably improved.

If to analyze student's I. performance, as it is shown in the Figure 3.1, he could reach 9 points in the first flipped lesson (dedicated to Halloween history), which makes appreciably difference, comparing to the 0 in the first lesson. As it is displayed, the highest score he could reach in the lesson 4, which contained a role-play about job interview.

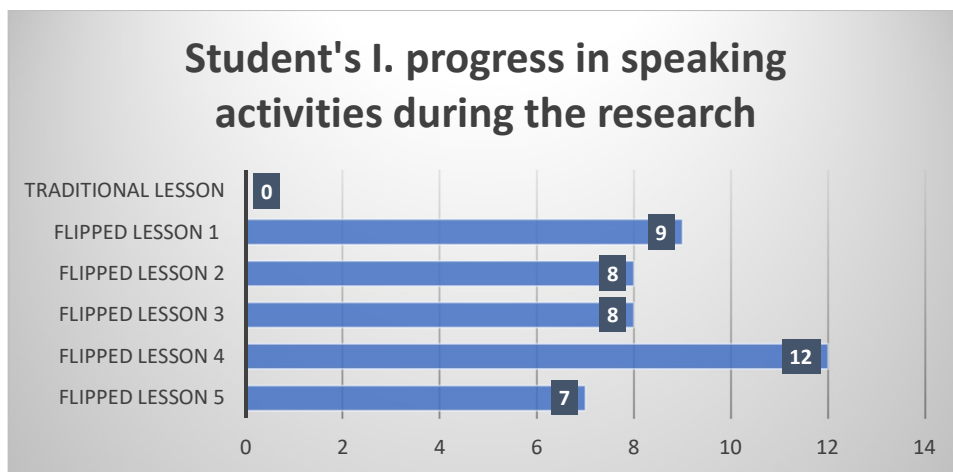


Figure 3.1. Student's I. progress in speaking activities during the research

Student's L. level, except for the first lesson, was consistently about 9 points (*Figure 3.2*). However, during the 4th lesson (job interview), he reached 12 points.

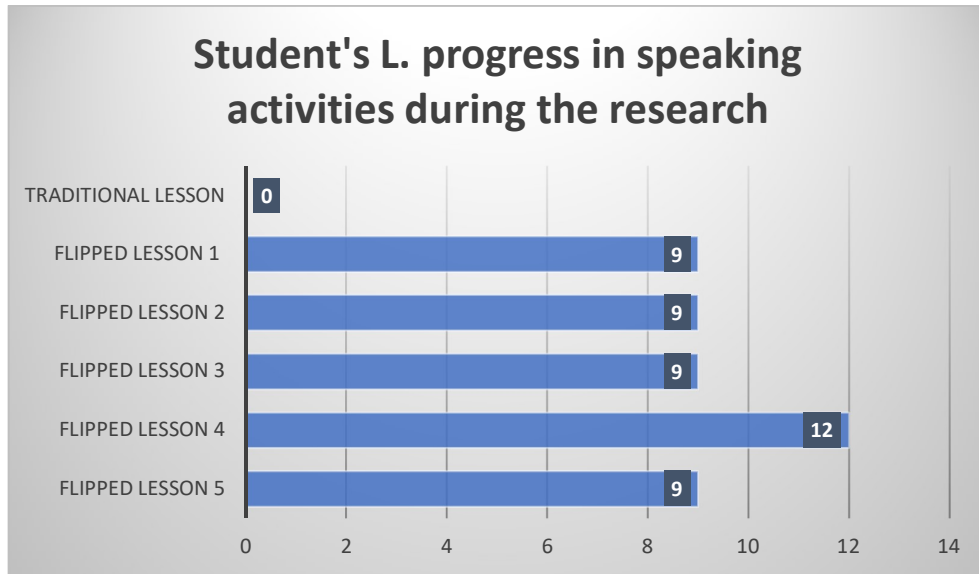


Figure 3.2. Student's L. progress in speaking activities during the research

Student's P. level, except for the first lesson, was consistently about 8 points (see *Figure 3.3*). But in the prepared role-play, concerning job interview, she was able to improve her performance and scored 12 points.

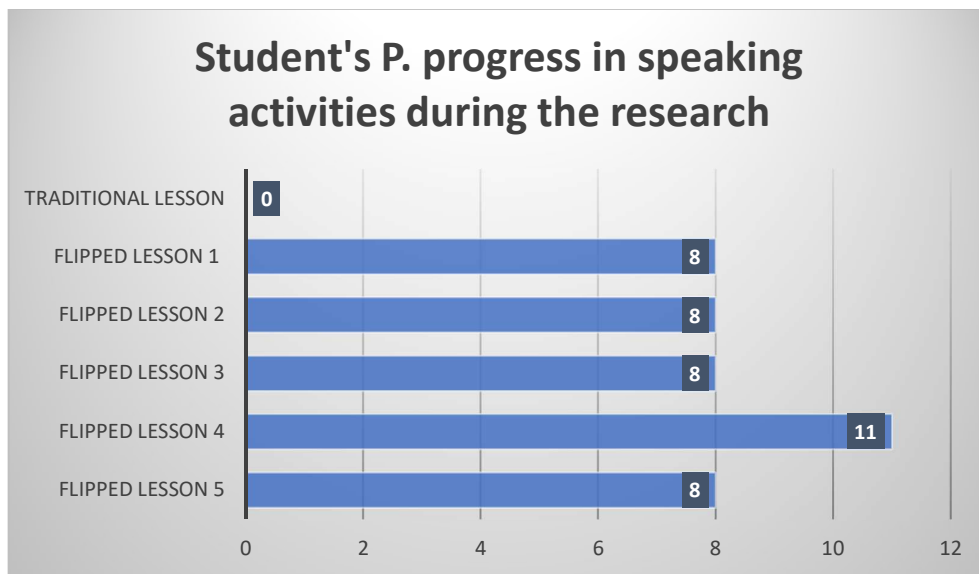


Figure 3.3. Student's P. progress in speaking activities during the research

Student's Y. performance, even during the traditional lesson, was 9 points (see *Figure 3.4*). After implementing the flipped learning, he showed progress and his performance was

evaluated by 10 points during most of the lessons. His highest assessment was 13, during the lesson, which contained role-play.

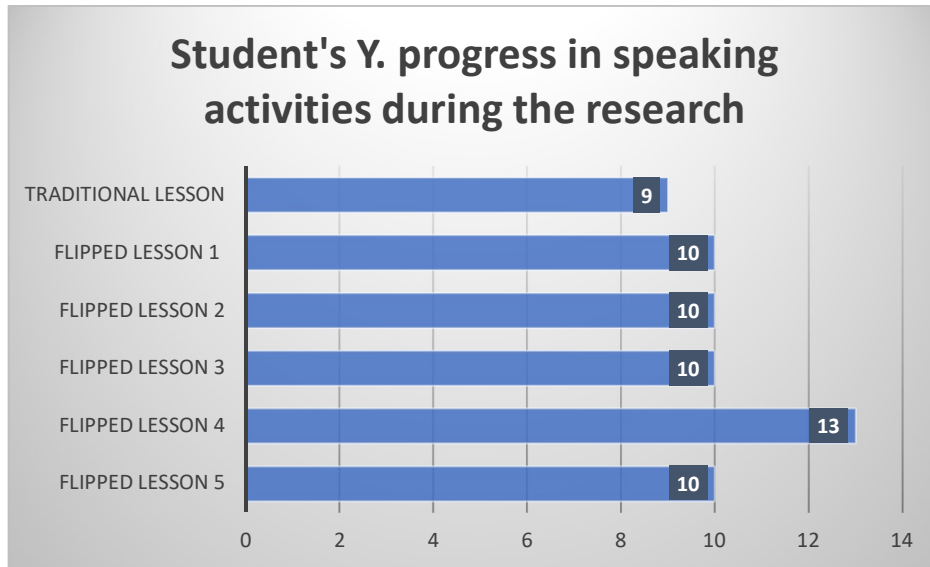


Figure 3.4. Student's Y. progress in speaking activities during the research

If to compare the efficiency of the lessons the by the total points gained, the result is as follows: the least efficient performance by the student was during the traditional lesson and the most productive was the flipped lesson, with the job interview role-play (see Figure 3.5)

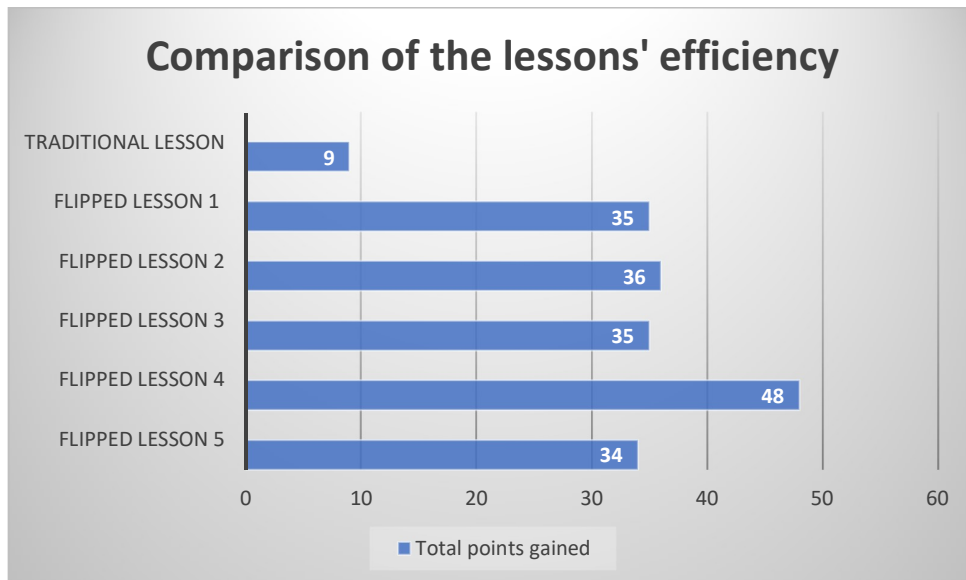


Figure 3.5. Comparison of the lessons' efficiency by the points, the students gained in total

This might lead to the conclusion that flipped lessons with the prepared role-play features might be the most engaging and most beneficial formats for students. However, this hypothesis needs further checking.

According to the Table. 3.10, the least engaging and efficient for the student's oral performance was the last flipped lesson about their leisure time. The speaking activity was poorly structured and the students' participation was not very active.

CONCLUSION

Development of communicative competence and speaking skills is one of the most important aspect of the language learning process. However, sometimes students have few opportunities to improve their oral skills in class, due to limited time. Besides, young learners are often anxious to speak in front of the audience. As a result, they do not feel comfortable and confident to participate in the oral activities.

The author of this study tried to determine whether flipped learning approach could be beneficial for improving 8th grade students' speaking skills.

Flipped learning is a model of learning which includes watching pre-recorded videos with the lesson content before the class. As a result, students have more time for clarifying the unclear concepts during the classes, asking questions and participating in other activities.

Findings about the concept in theoretical literature revealed that this model is rather student-centered, than teacher-centered, it might be considered as a part of the active learning. In this model students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, to ask questions about topics and share their own experience. Pre-recorded materials also help those students who were absent due to illness or other reasons not to get left behind, because they can access the videos any time they need. An opportunity to pause and rewind videos helps students to learn at their own pace.

The sceptics of the model, in their turn, note that some concepts are too complex to be explained with the help of video. One of the most important limitation of the approach is that students should do home assignments. Furthermore, despite the notion that internet is available everywhere, sometimes learners might have troubles to reach the Internet access.

Concerning the last argument, it is worth to mention that researchers usually emphasize the importance of the Internet access at home in order to do homework. However, as the experience of the author of this Diploma Paper shows, it is also important to ensure access to the Internet in the class as well, otherwise it is not possible to conduct a planned lesson.

During the case study, which was held among 4 students of the 8th Grade, the participants had shown positive attitude towards the flipped learning method. The students considered this class format to be interesting and engaging. However, they could not tell whether the flipped learning methods would improve their speaking skills. At the same time, the students had shown that they were able to memorize some words from the watched videos. They also agreed to continue to use videos in their future learning.

Regarding the speaking performance, the students demonstrated some improvements compared to the traditional lesson. The best academic results they reached when the flipped lesson was combined with a role-play.

The most active participation the students demonstrated during the lesson, where they discussed people chosen according to their own preferences. The students asked questions, took part in the discussion, showed curiosity, actively shared their opinion in English. However, sometimes still switched to their native language. In authors' opinion, it proves that the flipped learning is beneficial as a student-centered approach.

The author of this study also tried to determine whether flipped learning approach method was helpful to increase students' confidence while speaking. The students, answering the questions, expressed doubts about it.

Overall, the author, evaluating their academic achievement, could find evidence of the improvement in students' speaking performance. The students demonstrated better results, comparing to the conventional lesson, they also expressed positive attitude towards the method. In order to gain more convincing results, some additional research ought to be held in a class with a larger number of students.

The author of the Diploma Paper admits that there were several limitations of this research. First of all, the duration and amount of the flipped lessons was not enough to find evidence of the significant improvement in the student's oral performance. The number of the lessons also was not enough to find out which of the activities would be the most beneficial for the student's speaking skills development.

Secondly, the amount of the students was not enough to perform any quantitative research. The author focused on the students' speaking skills evaluation and their attitude towards the flipped learning. But in a larger group the results could be examined also in a quantitative manner. However, despite the limits, the author presumes that flipped learning could be beneficial for the students and there should be more studies on this method.

When asked what the students saw as the main issue of their speaking performance, the students answered - "vocabulary". Based on this, the author concludes that if the students had a richer vocabulary, they would become more efficient in their speech.

In order to find whether flipped learning method could impact vocabulary and lead to the improvement of the speaking skills in other aspects, other research ought to be conducted. The sample group size also ought to be widened.

THESES

1. Communication is an exchange of information between individuals in verbal, non-verbal, oral or written ways with the purpose to be understood. Communicative competence is understood as knowing, how to apply language rules in communication.
2. Communication skills are developed with the help of different activities. If students don't feel confident to speak, the teacher should give them a positive feedback and be tolerant to errors.
3. Flipped learning is a pedagogical approach in which direct instructions during the class are moved to the videos, which students are assigned to watch at home. It is considered to be an active learning strategy, combined with modern technologies.
4. The flipped learning has some important benefits: it provides opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning and receive more personalized syllabus; students can work at their own pace; there is more time for other activities in the class. Students' attitude towards the approach mostly is positive.
5. The model has some limitations and is criticized for some reasons. For example, watching many videos might be burdening for the students. In some cases, students struggle to understand the videos. The students might also come to the lesson unprepared.
6. Some research demonstrates the efficiency of the flipped learning approach in the development of speaking skills.
7. The flipped learning model was positively accepted in the observed class. After implementing the model, the students' speaking performance improved, in comparison with the traditional lesson.
8. The author of this study tried to find out whether flipped learning approach method was helpful to improve students' speaking skills. The findings of the research have shown some improvements in the students' academic achievements.

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APPENDICES

Appendix No.1

p.	Task achievement	Interaction	Accuracy	Fluency	Pronunciation
4	Task is achieved and communicated successfully	Intended meaning is communicated. Initiates and maintains interaction	A wide range of everyday vocabulary accurately used; large range of grammar structures used with a few errors.	Utterances are even and fluent	Accurate and consistent use of most aspects of pronunciation.
3	Task is achieved though some of the task requirements are lacking.	Communicates main ideas; some difficulties in initiation.	Moderate range of vocabulary. Quite accurate vocabulary use of grammar structures.	Although utterances are sometimes hesitant, the speaker is able to keep conversation going.	Intonation and pronunciation is quite accurate.
2	Task requirements are partly achieved.	Communicates main ideas in limited contexts; initiation rare.	Restricted range of vocabulary and grammar structures, sufficient for basic communication only.	Utterances halting and fragmentary except for short routine sentences and memorised phrases.	Frequent errors sometimes cause unintelligibility.
1	Does not know what to do to fulfil the task.	Great difficulty in communication. Unable to initiate.	Very restricted range of vocabulary; usually inadequate grammar.	Speech is slow, exceedingly halting and stumbling. Difficult to perceive continuity.	Speech is largely unintelligible.
0	Not enough to evaluate.	Not enough to evaluate.	Not enough to evaluate.	Not enough to evaluate.	Not enough to evaluate.

Lesson plan “History of Halloween”

	Aspect	Modelling
1	Theme and source material	History of the Halloween holiday Halloween History National Geographic - https://youtu.be/R-VRAemlvbI Halloween History: The History of the Jack O Lantern - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GA-9nPLcnTE
2	<p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language development • Intellectual development • Personality development 	<p>To develop listening for details. To practice asking and answering questions. To develop speaking skills, discussing experiences.</p> <p>To develop comprehension skill: summarizing information and creating their own questions.</p> <p>To learn to ask each other questions, taking turns.</p>
.	Aim for the teacher	To help students to speak freely.

No.	Stage and timing	Objective	Activities, instructions	Teaching aids, organisation form
	Preparation	To arouse students' interest in the topic of Halloween	The students were asked to watch the video about the history of the Halloween holiday at home and to prepare 5 questions for the peers.	Individual work
1.	Lead-in 5 min	To activate students' previous knowledge on the topic of Halloween	<p>Hello! How are you?</p> <p>Do you know what day it is today?</p> <p>What did you have to do at home?</p> <p>Did you watch the video?</p>	Students reply

2.	<p style="text-align: center;">Watching the video (1)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 min</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">To remind about the topic and the vocabulary</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Students watch the 1st video</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Computer</p>
3.	<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">15 min</p>	<p>To help student to take part in a discussion</p>	<p>What do we know now about Halloween?</p> <p>What would be your questions after the video?</p> <p>To summarise the teacher asks questions and elicits answers:</p> <p>1) What did the Celts celebrate on Oct. 31st?</p> <p>The end of the harvest season</p> <p>2) Who did the Celts believed walked the Earth?</p> <p>The ghosts of the dead</p> <p>3) What did the people do to send the dead spirits away from the living people?</p> <p>Made a big bonfire</p> <p>4) What was the holiday on November 1st by the Vatican order?</p> <p>All Saint's Day</p> <p>5) What does "Hallow" mean?</p> <p>A saint or holy person (in old English)</p> <p>Hallow eve transformed into Halloween</p> <p>6) How did Halloween make its way into the U.S.?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Students ask questions, a volunteer answers.</p>

			<p>With the Irish immigrants</p> <p>7) What traditions did the Irish bring in the U.S.?</p> <p>Bobbing for apples and playing tricks on neighbors</p> <p>8) What was the original meaning behind "trick-or-treating"?</p> <p>Give the kids candy or they will trash your house</p> <p>9) What is trick-or-treat now?</p> <p>The official phrase of the holiday</p>	
4.	<p>Watching the video (2)</p> <p>3 min</p>	<p>To give the students deeper impression about the topic and the related vocabulary; to help students practise listening skills.</p>	<p>Students watch the 2nd video</p>	<p>Computer</p>
5.	<p>Discussion</p> <p>10 min</p>	<p>To introduce the students with the vocabulary from the video, to arouse their interest about the topic, help them to speak freely</p>	<p>What is the legend of "Stingy Jack"?</p> <p>Elicit from students, what do they remember, if necessary, watch the video again.</p>	<p>Individual work</p>
6.	<p>Homework</p> <p>4 min</p>	<p>To sum up the lesson and tell the students, what are they expected to do</p>		

Lesson plan “A person with an interesting job”

	Aspect	Modelling
1	Theme and source material	A person with an interesting job Youtube.com
2	Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language development • Intellectual development • Personality development 	To develop listening for details. To practice asking and answering questions. To develop speaking skills, discussing experiences. To develop writing an essay. To develop comprehension skill: summarizing information. To develop evaluation, disputing on different people biographies, values, choices. To develop empathy to other people ideas, choices.
3.	Aim for the teacher	To help students to speak freely.

No.	Stage and timing	Objective	Activities, instructions	Teaching aids, organisation form
	Preparation	To choose an object for the discussion	The students were asked previously to find a short video (about 3 min) about a person, they consider interesting. They are also were asked to be ready to explain, why do they consider this person interesting.	
1.	Lead-in 3 min	To introduce to the topic.	Hello! How are you? Today you are ruling the content of our lesson. You were asked to show your classmates somebody interesting in your opinion. Please, share with us.	Students reply
2.	Watching videos and discussions 30	To start the discussion.	Students one after another show the videos, they have prepared. Later they explain, why they have chosen this person, why his biography and job is interesting. The students are encouraged to ask questions for their peers.	Computer

3.	Homework 7 min	To sum up the lesson and to tell the students about their homework.	Please, write about 200 words. Please, share your ideas about the most interesting character from today's lesson in an essay. The requirements for the essay are given in the instruction.	An instruction (see after the plan)
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Lesson plan “Secrets of success”

	Aspect	Modelling
1	Theme and source material	Secrets of success Secrets of success in 8 words, 3 minutes Richard St. John - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6bbMQXQ180 New Headway 3e Intermediate WB
2	Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language development • Intellectual development • Personality development 	<p>To develop speaking skills discussing experiences;</p> <p>To develop reading skills (reading for details),</p> <p>To develop vocabulary and grammar (to revise the Present Simple).</p> <p>To practice evaluation skill: to evaluate the ideas from the video and express their own opinion.</p> <p>To develop social perception of another person’s values and opinion.</p>
3	Aim for the teacher	To encourage students to speak freely.

No.	Stage and timing	Objective	Activities, instructions	Teaching aids, organisation form
	Preparation	To arouse students’ interest in the topic	The students were asked to watch the video about the secrets of success at home and to prepare to express their opinion on the values discussed (2-3 minutes)	Individual work
1.	Lead-in 7 min	To activate students’ previous knowledge on the topic of what success is.	<p>Hello! How are you?</p> <p>What in your opinion is success?</p> <p>Who can we call the successful people?</p> <p>Did you watch the video?</p> <p>Do you remember the people, mentioned there?</p> <p>Elicit answers or remind them:</p> <p>Bill Gates – founder of Microsoft;</p> <p>Freeman Thomas - an automobile and industrial designer for Porsche, Volkswagen, Daimler Chrysler and Ford.</p> <p>Rupert Murdoch - media magnat, Chairman and CEO of 21st Century Fox, Fox News</p>	Students reply

			Alex Garden -- game developer Norman Jewison - is a film director, producer. Galdie Hawn – actress. Are they successful in your opinion?	
2.	Watching the video 3 min	To remind students about vocabulary and the ideas for further discussion.	While the students watch, write on the board the values the author is mentioning: passion, work, being good at something, focus, pushing yourself, service (to others), ideas, persistence.	Students watch video Computer Board
3.	Discussion 15 min	To express ideas and exchange opinions	So, what do you think? What are the things you agree with? What are the things to disagree? Thank you for your participation!	Students reply, express their opinions
4.	Reading the text 10 min	To revise vocabulary and grammar (present simple, questions and negations)	Please, read the text in your workbook (“The Queen of fast food on Japanese trains”). Answer the questions after it (if finished reading).	Pair work Workbook
5.	Discussion 3 min	To help students to practise speaking and vocabulary on the topic	Can we call Kumiko a successful person? What are her success secrets?	Students answer
6.	Homework 2 min	To sum up the lesson and prepare for the next lesson	Please, finish the task in your work book.	Workbook

Lesson plan “Job interview”

	Aspect	Modelling
1	Theme and source material	Job interview Video - https://youtu.be/7qWysKTS_BA
2	Aims: Language development Intellectual development Personality development	To develop speaking skills, acting out roles (a role of an applicant for a job). To practice to ask questions and respond politely. To develop application skills, making their own dialogue after the sample. To learn how to interact with authority figures.
3	Aim for the teacher	To encourage students to speak freely.

No.	Stage and timing	Objective	Activities, instructions	Teaching aids, organisation form
	Preparation	To students the example of the job interview	The students were asked to watch a video in advance and to be ready to speak	
1.	Lead-in 4 min	To lead in the topic.	Hello! How are you? Today we will discuss a very important topic: how to make a good impression on our potential boss. How do you think, what should we do for this purpose?	Students reply
2.	Watching video 6 min	To remind students the video		Computer
3.	Revision of vocabulary 10 min	To revise vocabulary	So, what have you heard? What was the first interviewer’s question? “What do you consider your greatest strength?” The interviewer is using words “what do you consider” to make a question more polite. This is more polite, then “what is your greatest strength”. (Write on the board “What do you consider”) And the second question?	Students listen and reply Board

			<p>"May I ask you what your greatest weakness is?"</p> <p>The interviewer is using words "May I ask you" to make the question more polite. This is the polite way to say: "What is your greatest weakness". (Write on the board "May I ask you").</p> <p>Be careful, because in the long questions like this the words order changes. "Is" comes to the end. What other polite forms do you know?</p> <p>(Try to elicit: Can (could) you tell me.... Do you mind if I ask... I wonder if). (write the options on the on the board):</p>	
4.	Speaking practice 15 min	To act out a dialogue	Let's try to play a dialogue. I will be an interviewer, but you can also ask questions about the job conditions.	Students take part in the activity.
5.	Homework 5 min	To sum up the lesson and assign homework	For the next time, please, prepare a story what you do in your free time. Try to convince your classmates that your way of recreation is the best. In addition, prepare an analysis of your favourite song. We are going to listen to the and discuss.	

Lesson plan “The best way to spend free time”

	Aspect	Modelling
1	Theme and source material	The best way to spend free time
2	Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language development • Intellectual development • Personality development 	To develop speaking skills, discussing experiences about preferred music, sports and leisure activities. To develop evaluation skills, making judgements and comparing, which way of spending free time is the best. To demonstrate empathy.
3	Aim for the teacher	To encourage students to speak freely.

No.	Stage and timing	Objective	Activities, instructions	Teaching aids, organisation form
	Preparation	To have a material to discuss	The students were asked to prepare an analysis of their favourite song and to be ready to discuss what they do in their free time.	
1.	Lead-in 2 min	To lead in the topic.	Hello! How are you? Today we will discuss what do we do in our free time. Do you like music? Let's listen to your favourite songs and discuss them.	Students reply
2.	Listening to the songs and discussion 23 min	To encourage students to speak freely about their favourite songs.	Students play their favourite songs and answer the questions: what in their opinion is this about, what feelings they cause.	Computer
3.	Discussion of the free time activities 13 min	To encourage students to speak about their leisure time.	Please, share, what do you do in your free time.	Students share
4.	End 2 min	To sum up the lesson and welcome students to the next lesson	Thank you for your experience, are you convinced by your class mates? Let's continue on the next lesson.	

Diplomdarbs „Apgrieztā mācību metode skolēnu angļu valodas runāšanas prasmju pilnveidei 8. klasē" izstrādāts LU Pedagoģijas, psiholoģijas un mākslas fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

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Criteria to be evaluated	Comments, questions and suggestions
1. Abstract (one page, IMRAD structure: introduction, methods, results, discussion, keywords / Latvian version)	
2. Introduction: background information; problem, its topicality and discussion; aim and objectives (steps), logically leading to the aim	
Research questions: adequately formulated and genuine	
The choice of the research method and data collection methods	
3. Theoretical part — the basic literature survey: accurate references, discussion, author's opinion, logical succession and linking	
4. Research part:	
Structure of the research, research sample and stages, data collection methods	
Data presentation and analysis (clear, well-grounded, illustrative material added)	
Interpretation and evaluation of the data (reliability, objectivity, enough evidence)	
5. Conclusion (what has been done and main findings) and theses (main findings)	
6. Language competence (clarity, style, appropriate terminology, vocabulary, grammar, spelling)	
7. Criteria to be evaluated	Comments, questions and suggestions
8. Structure: title page, declaration of academic integrity, abstract, anotācija, table of contents, introduction, chapters, conclusion, theses, bibliography, appendices & (50 — 65 pages)	
9. Bibliography (amount, accuracy and adequacy of studied sources)	
10. Appendices and their relevance	
11. Visual and technical layout	

Signature:

Questions (see also overleaf):