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Student's Perspective on Flipped Classroom as an Innovative Approach in English Foreign Language Classes: A Selective Literature Review

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Abstract

The last decade was the time of the Internet rebellion, which had huge control over learning. Models in teaching languages continuously discover new training to join innovative technology with their teaching. Delivering lectures and doing activities are exchanged in the flipped classroom method. It means that learning occurs at home while giving clarifications and tasks in classes. The researchers in EFL classrooms investigated all skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students' perception is the vital point. This review article focuses on students' perceptions regarding the flipped method in EFL classes, published in the last four years. Five articles were chosen with focus criteria: flipped classroom, students' perceptions, and English as a Foreign Language. This review study used thematic analysis to analyze the review articles. The results of the study revealed that 2023 was the lucky year to have two published papers and grammar skills were mostly used in these five articles. Iran, as the setting of the studies, was localized more than other countries in these selectively reviewed papers. It also showed that students had positive views toward the flipped classroom and improved their academic performances. Moreover, English foreign classrooms were mostly implemented in flipped classrooms rather than separate skills like writing, reading, and grammar.

Keywords: Student perspectives, flipped classroom, EFL classrooms, innovative approaches

1. Introduction

1.1 Background Information

Internet development and its application have become a prominent aspect of lives in the 21st century. One of the sectors most affected by these developments was education. This innovation improved learning and teaching in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and speed of instruction. The distinctive feature of technology presents a great chance and an inspiring environment for learners recently. English foreign language teachers brought many technological tools to the English context with this rapid advancement of technology. Many English teachers quickly adapted Flipped Classroom to their classes. As, Afririlyasanti, et al. (2017) argued flipped classroom supports 21st-century learning and its characteristics, such as

critical thinking skills and proficiency in EFL. Technology has been used to broaden the context in the flipped classroom. In addition, Al-Harbi and Alsumaimeri (2012) defined a flipped classroom as learning occurring outside of the classroom: rehearsing, doing activities, and students interacting in the classroom. Correspondingly, Basal (2012) defines a flipped classroom as “what is traditionally done in class is now done at home, and what is traditionally done as homework is now completed in class” (p. 13). Finally, there are many synonyms for flipped classrooms, like ‘inverted classroom’, ‘inverted learning’, and ‘flipped classroom’. (Bergmann and Sams, 2012; Barker et al., 2013; Lage and Platt, 2000). In 2007, Colorado was the center of constructing the flipped classroom method by two science teachers to highlight the challenges such as student absences, particularly, at the end of the semester to help these students, and they begin to shoot a video of the lesson and share it with students. That was the first step in the flipped classroom method. In addition, Bergman and Sams (2017) investigated that a flipped classroom as a pedagogical approach delivers a great chance for better learning, increased interactions, and learner powers. In addition, it allows learners to revise the materials in their own way, promoting active learning. There are a lot of studies that have investigated the flipped classroom and students' perceptions.

The importance of Flipped Classroom FC was added to the flipped classroom. Basal (2015) inspired us with the idea that a positive FC details the recording and shares it with the students: The time spent on the activities and answering students' questions is more important than the video. The FC is used for doing exercises, sharing ideas, and comprehending unclear topics for the class. The video recorded needs to provide a class atmosphere for critical thinking skills and adopting active learning. Previously, learning was happening via taking notes in class, the instructor center, and listening to the teachers traditionally, but the flipped classroom transformed all these elements differently. For instance, students can learn from their style, which means learning can happen anytime and anywhere. The role of the flipped classroom has changed in three different forms: teacher-student center, high interaction among students and teachers from low, and gaining knowledge from the widespread use of technology in the learning and teaching process (Karimi and Hamzavi, 2017).

1.2 The Rational of the Study

Technology has had a huge influence on all aspects of life. Learning and teaching were not far from having the same great impact as utilizing a flipped classroom in any skill. In this review article, highly focuses on the EFL classes and students' perceptions. The significance of this review article depends on its aim and objectives to inspire curriculum designers, teachers, researchers, and stakeholders to implement this method in the Kurdistan region. As most of the

courses are delivered via traditional methods, they need to be shifted to post-era methods of teaching and learning.

1.3 The Aim

This review paper aims to analyze five articles on the flipped classroom and students' perceptions. This review focuses on the last six years of publications on the students' perceptions toward the flipped classroom approach as a pedagogical tool in teaching to be learners who are more independent and find their path in the process of learning the English language. The objective of the study was to analyze the key factors affecting students' perception of the flipped classroom. It was also highlighted how students perceive the effectiveness of flipped classrooms on their academic performance in learning the English language. To gain the aim of the study, these two research questions were scanned:

1. What are the students' perceptions toward flipped classrooms?
2. How does a flipped classroom impact on student's academic achievement in EFL classes?

1.4 The structure of the study

This recent review article encompasses five main sections: introduction, main body, methodology, discussion, and conclusion. The introduction delves into the background information, the purpose, significance, and the study's structure.

In addition, the main body covers an overview of all five studies in detail. Furthermore, more Discussion delivers the comparison and contrast in terms of the aim, problems, methods, and findings of all five articles on the flipped classroom method in terms of students' perception. Finally, the conclusion section illustrates the most important points of the finding and conclusion of the articles. It gives some recommendations as well.

2. Methodology

In this recent review article on the flipped classroom in English as a Foreign Language, which was published in the last 6 years, five articles have been chosen to be reviewed. The study aimed to provide authentic knowledge of students' perceptions of flipped classrooms. It is clear information for researchers, educators, and curriculum designers in the field. In this study, a thematic analysis was implemented. The researcher explored these five articles related to the flipped classroom. They were obtained through SCOPUS, Research Gate, and Google Scholar for finding the current articles on the title. When the search was conducted using these key terms, flipped classroom, EFL, student perspectives, and flipped classroom in the different skills in EFL classrooms the selection of the articles crossed some criteria. First, the articles need to be up-to-date, and they have been customized from 2017 to 2023 in terms of

publication. Second, the articles investigated students' perceptions of the flipped classroom. Third, the procedure focused on the empirical studies to investigate their data collection and methods. Lastly, the articles need to be carried out in different nationalities and settings.

3. Literature Review

Nowadays, technology's revolution has played a great role in most teaching styles. Therefore, the needs of styles require making the class teacher-centered or learner-centered. In recent times, English as a foreign language or English as a second language classes have become more student-centered. Active learning and learner-centeredness have a good connection with the concept of a flipped classroom. The flipped classroom, which depends on the theory of constructivism, combines the inside and outside of classroom activities. Alsowat (2016) describes the flipped classroom in two ways. Firstly, listening to the audio, watching videos, and reading related materials are outside activities. On the other hand, making the classroom interactive through individual work, pair work, some activities, and discussing the unclear points to resolve them.

3.1 Summary of the Articles 3.1.1 Students' Perception of Flipped Classroom in Grammar Skills:

Hasan et al. (2022) investigated a study on the conceptions and perceptions of undergraduate learners in an EFL-instructed flipped classroom. The study aimed to find out the students' perceptions toward FLC in learning grammar at a private university in Bangladesh. The study's participants were 200 (88 female and 112 male) freshmen students. The study used an explanatory design and implemented mixed-methods methods to obtain the data. For collecting quantitative data, 20 items of a questionnaire with five Likert scales were designed. The first ten items were designed to learn about the conception and perspectives of implementing FLC in teaching grammar. Furthermore, the last 10 items of the questionnaire were about the attitude of the undergraduate students toward FLC techniques. Qualitative data was collected via a semi-structured interview to investigate the reflections of the FL instructions. The questions from the interviews were adapted. Interviews took 20 to 30 minutes to finish. The quantitative data was analyzed via SPSS program version 24 with descriptive statistics. On the other hand, the interview was transcribed. NVIVO-12 was used to code, subcode, and categorize the data to find the themes of conception and point of view on the FLC. In this study, the quantitative results showed that students were highly positive about the conception of the flipped classroom, and they were able to develop their grammatical skills within the flipped classroom. Collaboration, improving student rapport, implementing technology more, and active learning in a favorable environment were the findings of the semi-structured interviews. The

participants claimed that there were some technical issues with the integration. They faced the challenges of workload in-class activities and pre-class preparation. They recommended providing some training for the teachers' preparedness.

Furthermore, a private language institute sector was localized to conduct an experimental study in Isfahan, Iran. Noroozi, Rezvani, and Ameri-Golestan (2021) examined the Iranian EFL learners' perceptions toward implementing flipped learning in grammar classes. It also assessed the effectiveness of flipped learning via WhatsApp on the student-centered interface, comprehension, grammar conceptions and skills, motivation, and finding their own path in the learning language process. The participants were 60 male intermediate EFL learners randomly assigned into two different groups. The experimental group instructed the flipped classroom via WhatsApp and the non-flipped classroom with the traditional teaching method. The mixed method with an experimental design was implemented in this study. To enhance the data, the College and University Classroom Environment Inventory was applied quantitatively to obtain the data from both groups. A semi-structured interview was a tool for collecting qualitative data with the sample size of the study to gain insights from the perspectives of FL and how it affects their academic achievements. A chi-square test was used to analyze the post-class activities to further test the impact of FL on students' comprehension.

Overall, the findings revealed that flipped learning highly affected the students' motivations, self-learning, and engagement in learning grammar skills, mainly through WhatsApp, and allowed to enhance learner-centered comprehension of grammar concepts of the Iranian EFL male learners. The results of this present study can be evidence for further studies and have implications for curriculum designers.

3.1.2 Students' Perception of Flipped Classroom in Reading Skills:

Researchers and educators embrace all the main skills, like reading and listening, as input skills and writing and speaking as output skills, in EFL courses. Ebrahimnezhad (2023) implemented a flipped classroom in the reading course to see the students' perceptions and the effectiveness of FLC on their performance. The study implemented a mixed-method approach. The research took place at a private language institute in Neka, Mazdaran, Iran. 30 pre-intermediate students were randomly selected as participants with an available sampling type. They were randomly divided into two groups, such as the experimental group and the control group. The data were collected through three different tools: a comprehensive reading as a pre-and post-test, a questionnaire, and an Oxford placement test. A pre-test was employed at the very beginning of the experimental project to test the learners' language background, particularly in reading skills. In 12 sessions as experimental groups, a flipped classroom was implemented, whereas

the lessons in control groups were delivered using traditional methods. After this period, a posttest was assigned for both groups to see the impact of FLC on the learners' academic achievement. In addition, the experimental group has been administered a related questionnaire to determine their perception of FLC. The study's result declared that there is a difference between the mean score of the pre and post-test in the experimental group. It was also found that FLC had a great effect on the students reading performance at this time. The participants in the experimental group were satisfied with the FLC. Generally, this recent study recommended that FLC have a vital influence on the student's reading skills and their engagement with the class.

3.1.3 Students' Perception of Flipped Classroom in Writing Skills:

Previous researchers demonstrated many studies on the students' perceptions of the flipped classroom method. Alghasab (2020) conducted a study on the flipped writing classroom, which shed light on the pedagogy, benefits, and perceptions of EFL students. This present study explores the flipped classroom application with student-teachers of the English language at the College of Basic Education in Kuwait, and it aims to investigate learners' perceptions regarding writing skill development. The research was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2019. The participants were 30 EFL learners who took an advanced writing course. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative. The researcher used a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. It was updated from previous studies to align with the emphasis of the instructional program on the flipped classroom in the writing course. In addition, all students were invited to a semi-structured interview. The quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS, and the qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The results revealed that Kuwaiti students had a positive attitude toward the flipped writing classroom. While the questionnaires' results declared that Flipped Writing Classroom (FWC) provides an effective learning atmosphere, it is a successful method for developing writing assignments, and it motivates students to have better writing flexibility regarding time, participation, and engagement in the class. Additional findings from the interview indicate that there are many sociocultural and contextual factors negatively affect the students interface.

3.1.4 Students' Perception of Flipped Classroom in Enhancing Students' Academic Skills:

Similarly, Ye (2023) conducted research on Chinese English as an EFL education for junior secondary schools. It explored various stakeholder perspectives (parents, students, teacher educators, and teachers) on the flipped classroom. This study aimed to investigate how FLC, as an innovative approach, improves students' academic achievement and their engagement in the learning process. To obtain an in-depth understanding of different stakeholders, a

qualitative method was applied. The data was collected through an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The recent data was analyzed via thematic analysis. It clearly states the differences and similarities of the results from these different groups. It allows for analyzing the data deductively and inductively. Overall, the study's results were classified into two different categories. First, the participants of the study had positive perceptions toward the FLC and viewed it constructively with its potential to develop students' critical thinking skills and understanding of the concepts of active learning, make students engaged in the class, enhance students' ability to speak fluently and improve their comprehension and vocabulary. The second section of the study's results showed some challenges faced by insiders: most of the students didn't have internet access, increasing teachers' workload in preparing materials for the class, adapting assessments traditionally to the flipped format, and the learners were required to have more self-discipline and manage their time to finish the tasks.

4. Discussion

These five current articles were analyzed in this review article about the student's perceptions of the flipped classroom as an innovative method. This review aims to explore and present the findings of this study on English Foreign Language EFL classes.

Conferring to the analysis of the five articles concerning the year of publication, two of them were published in 2023; the others were published in 2022, 2021, and 2020. It means the last four years; these studies on the flipped classroom regarding students' perceptions were done. Iran as the place of the study carried two papers, which is the highest rate among these five reviewed papers' settings. To gain comprehensive data and reach the goal of the studies, four of these articles implemented mixed methods, while the other utilized quantitative ones.

In addition, all five articles are implemented in EFL classes, but in different courses such as reading, grammar, writing, and learning English. The articles of Ebrahimmnezhad (2023), Hasan (2022), and Alghasab (2020) were conducted at the university level. They aimed to demonstrate the students' perceptions of the flipped classroom and its effectiveness on academic performance. Noroozi (2021) was placed in the language institute. Lastly, Ye (2023) conducted research in private and public schools.

In terms of the study's aim, all five papers aimed to investigate students' perceptions of a flipped classroom and to what extent FC effective their academic achievement in different courses.

Moreover,, regarding the limitations of these five articles, Noroozi, Rezvani, Ameri-Golestan (2021), and Ebrahimmnezhad (2023) can be together due to the fact that they conducted their studies with an experimental design and mixed methods were utilized, and their

findings somehow showed similarly. The studies have been conducted in the same country. Ebrahimmnezhad (2023) presents several insights and findings and tries to fill a kind of gap in the field, but it has several limitations, like the generalizability due to the fact that only a specific educational context was implemented with a small sample size that may limit the generalizability. The study solely focused on reading comprehension, not any other language skills. The questionnaire provided great insights into students' perceptions, but it was not tested for validity and reliability. The study also used a control group and an experimental group but did not provide enough details on the control group or which kind of traditional method was used. The study found that there is a significant difference in the student's scores in pre and post-test. It also found that flipped classrooms had a great impact on students' reading performance.

Similarly, Noroozi, Rezvani, and Ameri-Golestan (2021) conducted the study at the Language Institute in Iran. It declared many comprehensive findings regarding students' perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of grammar skills that were experimental, like the Ebrahimmnezhad study. The study's findings revealed that flipped classrooms influenced students' academic performance, self-learning, involvement in learning grammar skills, and understanding grammar concepts through Whats App platform. The study has some limitations as well. It included a small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the results to any other context. It also relies on self-reported data and objectives, which affects the validity of the findings. The study utilized WhatsApp as a single platform, which limits the broad applicability of learning from other digital platforms. Lastly, the duration of the study was short, which influenced the learning outcome as it has long-term effects.

Furthermore, Hasan (2022) investigated the viewpoints and conceptions of EFL learners in the flipped classroom. The study showed great findings. While it has some limitations, such as the sample size, particularly in a semi-structured interview, which included only five participants. This limits the generalizability of the results. Although there were not enough participants, it was not given enough demographics of the participants that may limit the applicability of the findings to a broader population of EFL learners, which would influence the validity of the study. In terms of the design, the study could not compare the learners' attitudes to evaluate the effect of flipped instruction techniques on the learners' competencies in grammar skills. The study's duration was constrained because of the academic university calendar and extracurriculars. A larger number of participants and a longer duration could deliver more reliable and accurate results, allowing more exploration of the effectiveness of a flipped classroom.

While Ye (2023) study had some boundaries, such as participants only in one city of China, that could be included in the other cities. The study didn't use any observational tools that may provide more comprehensive details in terms of the application of the FC. There was no quantitative method to measure the objectives of the effectiveness of the FC method. The study highlighted that the sample of the study were positive toward of implementing flipped classrooms in their classes. It helped students to develop their critical thinking skills, develop students speaking skills, and engage to the class actively. On the contrary, the study found students faced some challenges in this method, such as internet access, adapting new types of assessment, and students workload. Finally, the study could provide follow-up studies to evaluate the long-term effects on the academic performance and engagement of the participants.

Finally, Alghasab's (2020) study has some limitations. First, the sample size included only 30 female EFL students and teachers in the College of Basic Education in Kuwait, no other genders. It affects the generalizability of the results to a broader context. The researcher has conducted the study in his own class rather than introduce bias for the students responses. It may affect the external validity of the study. The researcher could utilize the pre-posttest for the quantitative method to measure the students' improvement in their writing skills. It could draw on the direct influence of the flipped classroom instruction on the students writing skills. Additionally, the study couldn't divide the participants into a control group and an experimental group; the absence of a control group limited the ability to compare the outcome of the study to see its effectiveness. Finally, the study didn't mention the challenges of the implementation of the FC method, like technical issues, teacher and student preparedness for the method, or any training.

5. Conclusion

The journal articles attempt to show learners' perspectives towards the flipped classroom method, its effectiveness on academic performances, and the challenges of FC that they face. However, most of the analyzed articles have similar research questions, aims, and objectives, but some of them utilized the different aspects of a flipped classroom.

Ebrahimnezhad (2023) examined students' perceptions in the reading class on flipped classrooms and their effectiveness on their academic performance. The study result declared that students have a positive attitude towards flipped classrooms, based on the difference in the mean score of the pre-posttest in the experimental group. It also affected the reading comprehension skills. Generally, the participants in the experimental group were satisfied with

the FC method. It also helped them to be self-directed learners. The second article by Ye (2023) aimed to highlight how FLC, as an innovative approach, improves students' academic achievement and their engagement in the learning process. The obtained data illustrated that participants in the study had positive opinions toward the FLC and viewed it constructively with its potential to develop students' critical thinking skills and understanding of the concepts of active learning, make students engaged in the class, enhance students ability to speak fluently, and improve their comprehension and vocabulary. Additionally, the results showed some challenges faced by insiders: most of the students didn't have internet access, increasing teachers workload in preparing materials for the class, adapting assessments traditionally to the flipped format, and the learners were required to have more self-discipline and manage their time to finish the tasks.

On the other hand, Hasan et al. (2022) investigated the students perceptions of FLC in learning grammar at a private university in Bangladesh. The researcher found students were highly positive about the conception of the flipped classroom, and they were able to develop their grammatical skills within the flipped classroom. The findings from the qualitative data showed that students developed their collaboration skills, improving student rapport, implementing technology more, and active learning in a favorable environment. The participants claimed that there are some technical issues with the integration of flipped classrooms in their courses. They also faced the challenges of workload in-class activities and pre-class preparation.

Furthermore, Noroozi, Rezvani, and Ameri-Golestan (2021) aimed to observe the Iranian EFL learners' perceptions toward implementing flipped learning in grammar classes. The findings discovered that flipped learning highly affected the students' motivations, self-learning, and engagement in learning grammar skills, mainly through What'sApp. It allowed to enhance learner-centered and comprehension grammar concepts of the Iranian EFL male learners.

Finally, Alghasab (2020) explored the flipped classroom application with students-teachers of English language at the College of Basic Education in Kuwait, and it also aimed to investigate learners' perceptions regarding writing skill development. The results revealed that Kuwaiti students had a positive attitude toward the flipped writing classroom. The study also showed that FWC fosters an effective learning atmosphere, serves as an effective method for enhancing writing tasks, and motivates students by offering greater writing flexibility in terms of time, participation, and engagement in the class.

In the end, the number of publications has increased last four years on the integration of flipped classroom methods in EFL settings. The trend was limited to the topic of students' perceptions. The main findings of the five empirical studies were reviewed. Future researchers may include more studies to be reviewed on students' perceptions of flipped classrooms. They may include teachers' perception of the flipped classroom and its effectiveness in the EFL contexts. It is a kind of source for teachers and researchers in the field.

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