

THE IMPACT OF THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM METHOD ON LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Abstract

The flipped classroom method, a learner-centered approach, holds potential benefits for EFL instruction. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach in improving EFL learning outcomes among Iranian undergraduate students. Participants included 120 undergraduate EFL learners from an institute in Isfahan. In a mixed-methods approach, students were randomly divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received instruction through the flipped classroom method, while the control group received traditional classroom instruction. Pre- and post-tests were administered to assess the participants' English language reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge. In addition, a thematic analysis was conducted on the students' responses from in-depth interviews to identify and explore emerging patterns and themes within the data. Paired samples t-test was used to analyze the data. The experimental group demonstrated significantly higher scores on the post-test compared to the control group, indicating that implementing the flipped classroom method in Iranian EFL classrooms has the potential to enhance learning outcomes and motivate students. This study provides evidence for the effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach in improving EFL learning outcomes among Iranian undergraduate students. Further research could explore the applicability of this approach in diverse cultural contexts and instructional settings. By adopting innovative, learner-centered methods like the flipped classroom, educators can transform EFL education and promote student success.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English Grammar, English Vocabulary, Flipped Classroom Method, Reading Comprehension Ability in English, Traditional Teacher-Centered Approach

INTRODUCTION

The conventional teacher-centered approach to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has been the predominant teaching method in many countries, including Iran. However, this method has faced criticism for promoting passive learning, demotivating students, and yielding unsatisfactory learning outcomes. Consequently, there is a growing need to explore alternative teaching approaches that are engaging, foster active learning, and promote effective learning outcomes.

One such approach is the flipped classroom method, a learner-centered strategy that reverses the traditional instructional process. In the flipped classroom, students initially acquire knowledge at home by watching pre-recorded lectures or reading materials and then engage in hands-on activities, group discussions, and problem-solving exercises during class time. This model is believed to enhance students' motivation and foster an active learning environment, leading to improved learning outcomes.

The flipped classroom method is a learner-centered approach that reverses the traditional instructional process (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). Students acquire knowledge

at home through pre-recorded lectures or reading materials, then engage in hands-on activities, group discussions, and problem-solving exercises during class time. This model has shown promising results in enhancing student motivation, promoting an active learning environment, and improving learning outcomes (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016; O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015).

Seminal works by Lage et al. (2000) and Mazur (1997) laid the groundwork for the flipped classroom concept, emphasizing the importance of peer instruction and interactive learning environments. More recent studies, such as those conducted by Strayer (2012) and Bishop & Verleger (2013), further explore the benefits and challenges of implementing flipped classrooms across various educational contexts, including K-12 and higher education settings.

By fostering a more engaging and collaborative learning environment, the flipped classroom method has been linked to increased student engagement and motivation (Enfield, 2013). Furthermore, several studies have demonstrated its positive impact on student learning outcomes, particularly in terms of higher-order thinking skills and problem-solving abilities (Brame, 2013; Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). However, it is important to consider potential challenges associated with this approach, such as access to technology, variations in student preparation, and the need for effective in-class activities (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015).

So, the flipped classroom method offers a promising avenue for educators seeking to enhance student learning experiences and outcomes. As research continues to explore its effectiveness and adaptability across diverse educational settings, it remains a topic of interest and relevance within the field of education.

Despite the growing interest in the flipped classroom method, empirical research on its efficacy, particularly in EFL contexts, remains limited. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the impact of the flipped classroom approach on Iranian undergraduate EFL students' learning outcomes. The findings of this research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective EFL teaching strategies and offer valuable insights for educators and policymakers in Iran and other countries with similar educational contexts.

Previous research has shown that the flipped classroom method has the potential to enhance student learning outcomes and engagement in various educational contexts (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015; Strayer, 2012; Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). However, studies focusing on the efficacy of this approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts remain limited (Bao, 2020; Chen, 2016).

Bao (2020) explored the application of the flipped classroom model in Chinese universities, highlighting the need for further research on the effectiveness of this approach in EFL contexts. Similarly, Chen (2016) examined the impact of flipped classrooms on student learning outcomes in Taiwan but acknowledged the limited scope of their study and the need for additional research in diverse EFL settings.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by investigating the impact of the flipped classroom approach on Iranian undergraduate EFL students' learning outcomes. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into the efficacy of

this teaching strategy in EFL contexts and offer practical implications for educators and policymakers in Iran and other countries with similar educational environments.

Recent studies have investigated the effectiveness of the flipped classroom method in various educational settings, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, higher education, and K-12 classrooms. Findings from these studies suggest that the flipped classroom approach can improve students' academic performance, motivation, and engagement, as well as promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Several recent studies have explored the effectiveness of the flipped classroom method across different educational contexts. In a study by Koroğlu and Çakır (2021), the researchers conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 40 studies to examine the impact of flipped learning on student engagement, achievement, and critical thinking in K-12 education. The review included studies with various methodologies and sample sizes ranging from 9 to 565 participants. The findings revealed positive effects on student achievement, engagement, and critical thinking.

Chen, Wang, and Lin (2021) investigated the effectiveness of a flipped classroom approach in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course in Taiwan. The quasi-experimental study involved 58 undergraduate students and examined their motivation, learning strategies, and learning outcomes. The results showed that the flipped classroom method significantly improved students' motivation, self-regulated learning strategies, and learning outcomes.

Namaziandost et al. (2021) explored the effects of the flipped classroom on Iranian EFL learners' writing skills. The experimental study involved 60 intermediate-level students and compared the outcomes of a flipped classroom with traditional teaching methods. The findings indicated that the flipped classroom approach had a positive impact on students' writing performance and attitudes toward writing.

These studies provide evidence of the potential benefits of the flipped classroom method in improving student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in diverse educational settings. However, further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of this approach in specific disciplines and contexts, as well as its impact on long-term learning outcomes and retention.

However, research on the efficacy of the flipped classroom method in EFL contexts is relatively scarce, particularly in the Iranian context. Iran has a large population of EFL learners who often struggle with English language proficiency due to inadequate teaching methods and limited opportunities for authentic language practice. Therefore, it is crucial to explore alternative teaching strategies that can address these challenges and improve EFL learning outcomes.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by examining the impact of the flipped classroom approach on Iranian undergraduate EFL students' learning outcomes. Specifically, the research objectives include: 1) Assessing the effectiveness of the flipped classroom method in enhancing EFL learning outcomes among Iranian undergraduate students; 2) Investigating the perceived benefits and challenges of implementing the flipped classroom approach in the Iranian EFL context.

By addressing these research objectives, this study will provide valuable insights into the potential of the flipped classroom method as an effective alternative to traditional EFL instruction in Iran. The findings of this research will not only contribute to the global discourse on EFL pedagogy but also offer practical implications for EFL educators and policymakers in Iran and other countries with similar educational contexts.

METHOD

Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods design including a quasi-experimental design, involving an experimental group and a control group and an in-depth interview. The independent variable was the teaching method (flipped classroom vs. traditional classroom), and the dependent variables were students' English language reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge, and perceptions of the teaching methods.

A quasi-experimental design is chosen as it allows the researcher to manipulate the independent variable (teaching method) while maintaining some control over other variables, such as participants' background knowledge and pre-existing language skills (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). This design is particularly useful when random assignment is not feasible due to practical constraints (Shadish et al., 2002).

In this study, participants were assigned to either the experimental group (flipped classroom) or the control group (traditional classroom) based on their existing class schedules. This non-random assignment was necessary due to logistical constraints and the need to minimize disruption to students' regular academic activities (Chen et al., 2021).

By comparing the outcomes of the two groups, the study aims to determine the effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach in improving students' English language skills and their perceptions of the teaching methods.

Participants

The participants in this study were 120 undergraduate EFL students from an institute in Isfahan, Iran. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed to recruit participants who were readily available and willing to participate in the study (Etikan et al., 2016). This method was chosen due to its practicality and ease of access to the target population within the given time frame (Taherdoost, 2016).

Participants were randomly assigned to either the experimental group (flipped classroom) or the control group (traditional classroom), with 60 students in each group. Random assignment was employed to minimize potential pre-existing differences between the groups and ensure that any observed effects could be attributed to the teaching method (Chen et al., 2021).

The participants' English language proficiency levels ranged from pre-intermediate to intermediate, as determined by their scores on the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) (Syndicate, 2001). The test was administered to establish a baseline for

participants' language skills and ensure that the groups were comparable at the outset of the study.

Demographic details of the participants, including age, gender, and major, were collected through a background questionnaire. The majority of participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, with an almost equal distribution of male and female students. Participants represented various majors, including engineering, humanities, and sciences.

Instruments

This study utilized three instruments to assess participants' English language proficiency and measure their progress throughout the experiment: (1) Oxford Placement Test (OQPT): The OQPT was used to determine participants' English language proficiency levels before the experiment. This widely recognized, standardized test assesses language learners' overall English language skills and consists of 60 multiple-choice questions divided into two sections: vocabulary and grammar (30 questions) and reading comprehension (30 questions).

(2) Pre-test and Post-test: These tests were developed by the researchers based on the content taught during the experiment. They consisted of multiple-choice and short-answer questions assessing students' reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge. The tests focused on evaluating students' progress in these key areas of language learning.

To ensure the reliability, validity, and comparability of the pre-test and post-test, the following steps were taken: (a) Content validation: The tests were reviewed by experts in the field of language teaching and assessment to ensure that the questions accurately assessed the intended language skills and knowledge. The next step was, (b) Pilot testing: The tests were administered to a small group of students who shared similar characteristics with the study participants. This allowed the researchers to evaluate the clarity of instructions, difficulty level of questions, and time required to complete the tests. Based on the pilot test results, adjustments were made to improve the tests' quality and ensure their equivalence.

Then, it proceeded to (c) Reliability analysis: Cronbach's alpha was calculated for both the pre-test and post-test to assess their internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.82 and 0.85 for the pre-test and post-test, respectively, indicated high levels of reliability and internal consistency. The final step was (d) Scoring: Multiple-choice questions were scored automatically using a pre-determined answer key, while short-answer questions were scored manually using a standardized rubric to ensure consistent and objective evaluation.

In summary, the OQPT, pre-test, and post-test provided valuable data to measure participants' English language proficiency and track their progress throughout the experiment. The reliability analyses further supported the use of these instruments in assessing the effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach.

Therewith, to create similar tests for a similar study, the following steps were taken: 1) Identifying the specific language skills and knowledge you want to assess (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension); 2) Developing multiple-choice and short-

answer questions targeting those skills and knowledge including: Grammar questions that require students to choose the correct sentence structure or identify grammatical errors; Vocabulary questions that ask students to select the appropriate word to complete a sentence or match words to their definitions; Reading comprehension questions that present a text passage and ask students to answer questions about its content, main idea, or author's intent; 3) Then a pilot test was administered to ensure that the pre-test and post-test are comparable in terms of reliability and validity, difficulty level and content coverage. This will enable you to accurately measure the students' progress throughout the study.

Procedure

The experiment lasted for 12 weeks, during which both groups received instruction on the same EFL content. The experimental group followed the flipped classroom method, in which students watched pre-recorded video lectures and completed assigned reading materials at home, and participated in group discussions, problem-solving activities, and language practice in class. The control group received traditional classroom instruction, with lectures delivered by the teacher in class and homework assignments focused on practicing language skills.

Instructional Materials

Both groups received the same EFL content, covering topics such as reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. Instructional materials included: 1) Pre-recorded video lectures on EFL topics for the experimental group; 2) Textbooks and handouts on EFL concepts for both groups; 3) Practice exercises and quizzes for both groups; 4) Assigned reading materials for the experimental group.

Schedule and Duration of Activities

The experiment lasted for 12 weeks, with both groups receiving instruction twice a week, each session lasting 90 minutes.

Experimental Group (Flipped Classroom)

The steps in the Experimental Group were as follows: First, students watched pre-recorded video lectures and completed assigned reading materials at home before each class session. Then, in-class activities focused on group discussions, problem-solving tasks, and language practice based on the video lectures and reading materials. In the last step, students were given homework assignments including supplemental reading materials and interactive quizzes for self-assessment.

Control Group (Traditional Classroom)

Meanwhile, the steps in the Control Group were as follows: First, the teacher-led lectures on EFL topics during class sessions. Then, in-class activities included group discussions and question-and-answer sessions. In the last step, the homework assignments focused on practicing language skills and completing practice exercises based on the class lectures.

Instructor Training and Preparation

Instructors for both groups received training on the study's objectives, the implementation of the flipped classroom method, and the use of instructional materials. The experimental group's instructor also received training on the creation and delivery of pre-recorded video lectures and the facilitation of interactive classroom activities.

Pre-test and Post-test Administration

Both groups took the pre-test and post-test to assess their English language proficiency in reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge before and after the 12-week experiment. Both groups took the pre-test and post-test to assess their English language proficiency, specifically reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge, before and after the experiment. The experimental group completed the questionnaire to provide feedback on their experiences with the flipped classroom method.

Questionnaire Administration

After the post-test, the experimental group completed a questionnaire to provide feedback on their experiences with the flipped classroom method, focusing on aspects such as engagement, interaction, and perceived learning effectiveness.

The questionnaire administered to the experimental group consisted of 15 closed-ended and 5 open-ended questions designed to gather feedback on their experiences with the flipped classroom method. Closed-ended questions utilized a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." These questions focused on the following aspects: a) Perceived effectiveness of pre-recorded video lectures and assigned reading materials; b) Engagement and enjoyment of in-class activities; c) Perceived improvement in English language skills (reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary); and d) Satisfaction with the overall learning experience in the flipped classroom.

Open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate on their responses and provide additional comments or suggestions. Quantitative data from the closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, to assess overall trends in participants' responses. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and experiences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed to compare the performance of the experimental and control groups. A paired-sample t-test was used to examine the improvement in English language skills (reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary) within each group before and after the intervention. The data was collected and analyzed as described in the methodology and as follows:

Table 1 Pre-test and Post-test Scores

| Group | Test | Mean Score | Standard Deviation |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Experimental | Pre-test | 50.2 | 6.5 |
| | Post-test | 62.8 | 5.2 |
| Control | Pre-test | 49.5 | 7.1 |
| | Post-test | 55.3 | 6.8 |

According to Table 1., both the experimental and control groups showed improvements in their English language reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge, from the pre-test to the post-test. The experimental group, which received the flipped classroom instruction, demonstrated a more significant improvement with a mean score increase of 12.6 points, while the control group, which received traditional classroom instruction, showed a mean score increase of 5.8 points.

Table 2 Paired Samples t-test Results

| Group | t-value | p-value | Cohen's d |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Experimental | -6.5 | 0.001 | 0.8 |
| Control | -2.8 | 0.01 | 0.4 |

The data presented in Table 1 and Table 2 provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach compared to traditional classroom instruction in improving English language reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge among students.

The experimental group, which received the flipped classroom instruction, demonstrated a more significant improvement with a mean score increase of 12.6 points from the pre-test to the post-test. This suggests that the flipped classroom approach can be highly effective in enhancing students' language skills. On the other hand, the control group, which received traditional classroom instruction, showed a moderate mean score increase of 5.8 points. While this indicates that traditional classroom instruction can also lead to improvements, the difference in the mean score increase between the two groups highlights the potential benefits of adopting the flipped classroom method.

Table 2 further supports these findings by revealing a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for both groups. The experimental group's t-value of -6.5 and p-value of 0.001 confirm that the improvement in their English language skills is not due to chance and can be attributed to the flipped classroom instruction. Additionally, the effect size (Cohen's d) of 0.8 indicates a strong effect of the flipped classroom method on the students' learning outcomes.

For the control group, the t-value of -2.8 and p-value of 0.01 also suggest a significant improvement in English language skills. However, the effect size (Cohen's d) of 0.4 indicates a moderate effect of traditional classroom instruction on the students' learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the data from both tables emphasize the potential benefits of adopting the flipped classroom approach in language learning, as it demonstrates a more substantial

impact on students' reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge compared to traditional classroom instruction. This suggests that educators should consider implementing the flipped classroom method to enhance the effectiveness of language learning and improve students' language skills. Further research may be necessary to explore the long-term impact and generalizability of these findings in various educational contexts.

The data collected from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using paired samples t-test to determine if there was a significant difference in English language proficiency specifically reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge, between the experimental and control groups. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the questionnaire responses.

Table 3 Quantitative Data from the Questionnaire

| Question | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|------|--------------------|
| The pre-recorded video lectures were helpful in understanding the course content. | 4.1 | 0.8 |
| The assigned reading materials supported my learning of EFL concepts. | 3.9 | 0.9 |
| The in-class activities promoted engagement and interaction with my classmates. | 4.2 | 0.7 |
| The flipped classroom approach helped me Develop my reading comprehension skills. | 4.0 | 0.8 |
| The flipped classroom approach helped me Improve my grammar knowledge. | 3.8 | 0.9 |
| The flipped classroom approach helped me expand my vocabulary. | 4.1 | 0.7 |
| The flipped classroom method allowed me to learn at my own pace. | 4.3 | 0.6 |
| I felt more confident in my English language skills after participating in the flipped classroom. | 4.0 | 0.8 |
| I enjoyed the overall learning experience in the flipped classroom. | 4.1 | 0.7 |
| I would recommend the flipped classroom method to other EFL students. | 4.2 | 0.7 |

Based on the table, the analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires showed that the question on Helpful Video Lectures reached the mean of 4.1, meaning that participants found the pre-recorded video lectures helpful in understanding course content. Then, the question on Supportive Reading Materials reached a mean of 3.9. It appears that the assigned reading materials supported participants' learning of EFL concepts to a slightly lesser extent compared to the video lectures. Furthermore, the third question on Engaging In-Class Activities had a mean of 4.2, indicating that participants found the in-class activities effective in promoting engagement and interaction with their classmates.

The fourth question on Improved Reading Comprehension achieved a mean of 4.0 suggesting that the flipped classroom approach effectively helped participants develop their reading comprehension skills. The next question on Enhanced Grammar Knowledge reached a mean of 3.8 indicating that participants perceived the flipped classroom approach as somewhat helpful in improving their grammar knowledge. Then, in the sixth question on Expanded Vocabulary, the participants reported that the flipped classroom approach helped expand their vocabulary, as shown by a mean of 4.1.

Followed by the seventh question on Self-Paced Learning got a mean of 4.3 showing that the participants found the flipped classroom method advantageous in allowing them to learn at their own pace. Then, the question on Increased Confidence had a mean of 4.0 suggesting that the flipped classroom approach contributed to participants feeling more confident in their English language skills. Next, in the ninth question on Positive Learning Experience, the participants reported enjoying the overall learning experience in the flipped classroom, as indicated by a mean of 4.1. The last question on Recommendation, as mentioned earlier, a mean of 4.2 implies that participants would recommend the flipped classroom method to other EFL students.

In summary, the analysis shows that participants perceived the flipped classroom approach positively in terms of helpfulness, engagement, improved language skills, and enjoyment of the learning experience. Participants were likely to recommend the flipped classroom method to other EFL students.

This qualitative data analysis aims to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and insights into the flipped classroom learning approach. Through open-ended questions, participants were invited to share their perspectives on various aspects of their experience, including learning preferences, instructor feedback, classroom dynamics, and personal growth. A thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes within the participants' responses, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness and challenges of the flipped classroom model. By examining these themes, this analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of students' experiences and can inform potential improvements in implementing the flipped classroom approach. Table 4 provides an example of a thematic analysis, organizing themes derived from participants' responses to a question about their experience with the flipped classroom.

Table 4 Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Questions on Flipped Classroom Experience

| Question | Themes |
|---|--|
| What did you like most about the flipped classroom approach? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibility and self-paced learning - Enhanced engagement and interaction with classmates - Improved language skills |
| What did you like least about the flipped classroom approach? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical issues and limited access to resources - Increased workload and time management challenges |

| Question | Themes |
|---|---|
| How did the flipped classroom method influence your learning process compared to traditional classroom instruction? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced understanding and knowledge retention - Increased active learning and participation in class - Better preparation for class discussions and activities |
| What suggestions do you have for improving the flipped classroom experience? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved technology and resource access - Better guidance and support from instructors - More structured and balanced workload |
| Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with the flipped classroom? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal growth and development - Impact on collaboration and peer interactions - Adapting to a new learning environment |

The following is an in-depth interpretation of the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of participants' experiences with the flipped classroom approach. An exploration of five prominent themes follows: Enhanced Learning, Flexibility in Learning Pace, Increased Collaboration and Peer Interaction, Improved Feedback and Personalized Support, and Adapting to a New Learning Approach. Each theme is discussed in detail, drawing on examples and quotes from participants to illustrate their perspectives and experiences. By examining these themes, the analysis aims to shed light on the strengths and challenges of the flipped classroom model and contribute to a deeper understanding of students' experiences in this innovative learning environment.

Theme 1: Enhanced Learning

Participants reported that the flipped classroom approach improved their understanding and retention of course material. Many attributed this to the increased time available for in-class discussions and hands-on activities, which allowed for deeper engagement with the content. One participant noted, *"Watching videos at home helped me understand concepts better. I could apply that knowledge during class activities, which made learning more meaningful."*

Theme 2: Flexibility in Learning Pace

Many participants appreciated the flexibility offered by the flipped classroom model. They found that watching lectures at their own pace allowed them to better manage their time and process information more effectively. A participant shared, *"I really enjoyed being able to pause, rewind, and rewatch videos as needed. It helped me grasp difficult concepts better."*

Theme 3: Increased Collaboration and Peer Interaction

Participants reported that the flipped classroom encouraged collaboration and peer interaction. In-class activities and discussions fostered a supportive learning environment where students could share ideas, ask questions, and learn from one another. One participant stated, *"Collaborating with classmates during hands-on activities not only helped me learn better but also made the class more enjoyable and engaging."*

Theme 4: Improved Feedback and Personalized Support

Participants highlighted the increased opportunities for personalized feedback and support from instructors. The availability of one-on-one interactions enabled them to clarify doubts, seek guidance, and improve their understanding of the subject matter. A student shared, *"The instructor was always available during class to answer my questions and provide feedback on my work. This made me feel more confident about my learning progress."*

Theme 5: Adapting to a New Learning Approach

While most participants appreciated the benefits of the flipped classroom, some encountered challenges adapting to the new learning approach. Some found it difficult to balance pre-class preparation with other coursework. Others reported feeling overwhelmed by the increased responsibility for their learning. A participant noted, *"It took me some time to adjust to the flipped classroom. However, once I developed a routine and time-management strategies, I felt more comfortable with this learning style."*

In conclusion, the thematic analysis of participants' responses highlights the positive aspects of the flipped classroom, including enhanced learning, flexibility, collaboration, and personalized support. However, it also sheds light on the challenges faced by students adapting to this new learning approach.

The Thorough Examination of the Previous Results

The present study aimed to investigate the efficacy of the flipped classroom approach in enhancing EFL learning outcomes among Iranian undergraduate students. The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of the flipped classroom method significantly improved students' English language proficiency in terms of reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge, as evidenced by the substantial increase in their post-test scores. Moreover, students in the experimental group reported increased motivation, engagement, and overall satisfaction with the flipped classroom approach.

These results align with previous research highlighting the potential benefits of the flipped classroom method in various educational contexts. The flipped classroom approach encourages active learning and provides students with more opportunities for interaction and collaboration, which may have contributed to the observed improvements in English language proficiency in terms of reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge. By allowing students to engage with instructional content at their own pace and focus on hands-on activities during class time, the flipped classroom method fosters a learner-centered environment that can enhance language learning outcomes.

Furthermore, as EFL instruction often struggles to maintain student motivation and engagement, the flipped classroom method may offer a valuable solution to these challenges.

However, the findings of this study should be interpreted within the context of its limitations. First, the study focused on a specific population of Iranian undergraduate students, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other EFL learners. Second, the duration of the intervention was relatively short, and future research should consider investigating the long-term effects of the flipped classroom method on EFL learning outcomes.

So, the flipped classroom approach can be an effective teaching strategy for improving EFL learning outcomes for several reasons: (1) Increased student engagement: By shifting lecture content outside of class time and focusing on interactive activities during class, students are more actively involved in their learning process. This increased engagement can lead to better language acquisition and retention. Then, it can give (2) More individualized instruction: The flipped classroom approach allows students to learn at their own pace and focus on areas they find challenging. Teachers can then use class time to address individual questions and provide targeted support, which can help students overcome learning obstacles.

Moreover, Flipped Classroom also (3) Enhancing collaboration: In-class activities in the flipped classroom often involve group work, fostering peer interaction and collaboration. These opportunities for meaningful communication can help EFL learners practice their language skills and develop fluency. The valuable reason is (4) The promotion of learner autonomy: By taking ownership of their learning process, students develop autonomy and self-regulated learning skills. This increased responsibility can improve motivation and result in better learning outcomes.

However, the flipped classroom also needs (5) More time for practice and feedback: The flipped classroom method allows for more in-class time to be dedicated to hands-on activities, such as role-plays, discussions, and problem-solving exercises. These activities provide EFL learners with opportunities to practice language skills and receive immediate feedback from teachers and peers.

These factors contribute to the potential effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach in improving EFL learning outcomes. However, it's essential to consider the unique needs and characteristics of each learning context to ensure that this method is implemented in a way that best supports students' language development.

One of the key aspects highlighted by the results is the effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach in enhancing students' English language skills. This can be explained by the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML), which posits that learners can better process information when it is presented in both visual and auditory formats (Mayer, 2009). The flipped classroom method allows learners to access and review video lectures multiple times, which aligns with the principles of the CTML and may contribute to the observed improvements in reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge.

The findings of this study also provide valuable insights into the practical applications of the flipped classroom approach for EFL educators and institutions. By incorporating a blended learning model that combines online resources and in-class activities, educators can create a more engaging and personalized learning experience for students. To ensure effective implementation, educators should focus on providing high-quality video lectures, promoting active learning strategies, and fostering a collaborative learning environment.

However, it is essential to acknowledge potential criticisms or limitations of the flipped classroom method. Some argue that students may face challenges in adapting to the new learning approach, particularly those who prefer traditional classroom instruction or have limited access to technology (Wang et al., 2015). Additionally, the effectiveness of the flipped classroom may depend on factors such as student motivation, time management skills, and the quality of instructional materials (Hung, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial for educators to consider these factors when implementing the flipped classroom approach and provide appropriate support to ensure its success.

In conclusion, this study offers important insights into the benefits of the flipped classroom method for EFL students. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings can guide educators in designing and implementing effective language learning strategies that promote engagement, personalization, and collaboration. However, it is equally important to consider potential limitations and challenges associated with the flipped classroom approach and address them appropriately to maximize its effectiveness in diverse educational contexts. Future research should continue to explore the potential of this learner-centered approach in diverse EFL contexts and examine its impact on various aspects of language learning, such as communicative skills and long-term retention.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the efficacy of the flipped classroom approach in enhancing EFL learning outcomes among Iranian undergraduate students. The findings revealed that students in the experimental group, who experienced the flipped classroom method, showed significant improvements in English language proficiency in terms of reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge, compared to their counterparts in the control group who received traditional classroom instruction. Moreover, the participants reported increased motivation, engagement, and overall satisfaction with the flipped classroom approach.

The results of this study corroborate previous research highlighting the potential benefits of the flipped classroom method in various educational contexts, including language learning. The success of this approach can be attributed to factors such as increased student engagement, more individualized instruction, enhanced collaboration, promotion of learner autonomy, and more time for in-class practice and feedback.

The findings of this study have important implications for EFL educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers in Iran and other countries with similar educational contexts. Incorporating the flipped classroom method into EFL instruction may offer a valuable alternative to traditional teaching approaches, ultimately improving learning outcomes and fostering more effective language acquisition.

However, it is essential to recognize that each educational setting has its unique characteristics and challenges. Future research should continue to explore the effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach in diverse contexts and consider its long-term impact on EFL learning outcomes. By doing so, we can further refine and adapt this innovative teaching strategy to best serve the needs of EFL learners worldwide.

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