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Original Article

The Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners` Attitudes towards Using Flipped Teaching via Google Classroom

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Abstract

Flipped teaching is the process of moving lecture content from face-to-face class time to before class. The potential values of flipped teaching in which learners are actively engaged in the learning process have been emphasized during the past years; however, there is still little research evidence about the attitudes of the learners towards flipped teaching and the use of technology. The present investigation aimed to explore Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards flipped teaching. To this end, 40 female intermediate EFL learners with the age range of 19 to 29 from the training department of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in Khuzestan, Iran, based on the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) were selected through convenience sampling and assigned into two groups with the same instructional strategies since having 40 students in a single class was not possible. An attitude questionnaire was examined in terms of frequencies and percentages. The results of frequency analyses indicated that EFL learners in the study had a positive attitude towards flipped teaching and agreed that it was helpful to them in many ways. The findings can be of significance for EFL learners, instructors, and syllabus designers.

Keywords: Attitudes, Autonomous Learning, Classroom Engagement, Flipped Teaching, Google Classroom

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1. Introduction

In today's modern world of communication, learning English has gained a remarkable status in many foreign countries including Iran. Learning a language encompasses numerous mental processes, such as learners' various cognitive styles, aptitude, beliefs, motivation, attitude and many other factors. Thus, attitudes about learning a language in general and about an instructional method in particular, can be among the determining factors which affect the learners' efficiency in language classrooms. Consequently, educators and instructors need to be careful in considering these aspects. Attitude is a mental state that involves feelings and beliefs and is a significant concept to understand the learners' behavior (Latchanna & Dagnew, 2009). Accordingly, the current investigation sought the attitudes of the learners towards the flipped teaching via Google Classroom.

The academic literature lacks a single, agreed-upon definition of flipped teaching; however, the main idea, as stated by Bergmann and Sams (2012), is that what is traditionally done in class and what is traditionally done as homework are inverted or flipped. According to Sams (2011), there are no set formulas for designing a flipped classroom; however, this approach is informed by a socio-constructivist framework which suggests that active learning needs to occur in the classroom, and passive activities should be done at home. Similarly, Eric Mazur (2009), the founder of Peer Instruction, asserts that in the standard teaching, the active part of the acquisition is assigned to the learners outside of the class. Therefore, various descriptions of the flipped teaching are all formed around devoting in-class phase for active learning, as well as supporting learners while they are learning rather than merely re-arranging the tasks and activities (Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

Fulton (2012) identified the following among the advantages of the flipped teaching model: learners move at their own pace; classroom time can be used more creatively and effectively; student difficulties and learning styles can be revealed to the teachers; therefore, teachers can customize the curriculum for the students more easily; the levels of students' engagement, interest, and achievement is increased in this method; new approaches are supported by the learning theory, and the implementation of technology is appropriate and flexible for learning. New technology has offered opportunities even for novice teachers to flip their classes. One of the technologies for flipped teaching is Google Classroom that is a free collaboration means for teachers and learners. Teachers can create,

distribute and grade assignments free of paper by using this application. Google Classroom provides both students and teachers with the opportunity to discuss the assignments and teachers can track the learners' progress.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Flipped Learning

Flipped learning is one of the most recent instructional innovations, which is believed to have the potential to change conventional classes to a more motivating one (Chen Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2016). Moreover, flipped learning is believed to be a unique evolution in methodologies, which the role of homework and classroom instruction are revered. In traditional classes, delivery of materials containing lectures and or assignments happen in the classrooms, while in flipped learning, students receive knowledge at home by watching videos or slides prepared by teachers, and receive practice in the class (Amiryousefi, 2017).

Flipped learning involves the use of digital technology such as video or podcasts and interactive exercises, to provide direct instruction on new concepts outside of the classroom. In flipped learning students have a preliminary understanding of the topic; this way the class time will be freed up for the teacher to focus on learning activities (Straw, Quinlan, Harland, Walker, 2015). In flipped learning the time at home is used for the delivery of new content before a lesson and the class time is used for addressing misconceptions, and deepening understanding. In flipped classrooms practicing flipped learning in ELT, the class time can be used to do higher order skills to help learners improve their language learning abilities. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) stated that flipped learning needs learners do the lower levels of cognitive abilities such as knowledge and comprehension outside the classroom, and in the classroom they can work on higher order skills such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation with the aid of their teachers and peers.

Flipped learning according to Flipped Learning Network (2014) is defined as a pedagogical approach in which there is a dynamic and interactive environment where the teachers help students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter. In flipped learning direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, therefore the resulting space can be considered as a dynamic one. Students

in flipped learning environments are actively engaged in learning which encourages teachers to implement new or various methodologies in their classrooms. Students will be able to work in groups.

Flipped learning has the potential to provide a dynamic environment in which students are actively involved in learning. It also can help students learn at their own pace. For example, when receive videos at home they can pause, rewind, or replay the videos to have a better understanding of the materials. Flipped learning also provides students with some opportunities to use the materials more widely, which can contribute to the development of communicative competence. In flipped learning, active learning happens because the time of class has been freed up and the teacher has more time to work on active learning using various activities which need the students to be involved in learning materials (Bergman & Sams, 2012; Amiryousefi, 2017).

2.2. Flipped Classroom

Flipped teaching has raised great attention in the past few years; however, its underlying concept is not new to the academic scene. Research has not identified one particular person in creating the pedagogical theory of the flipped approach. However, often regarded as its origin is a Physics course at Harvard University instructed by Professor Mazur in 1991. Preparing some videos in advance for the learners made Mazur able to have more time in class and act as a guide which in turn leads to more students' achievement. According to Crouch and Mazur (2001), shifting the knowledge transfer phase-out of the class and moving the information assimilation phase into the class enabled them to teach students in their learning rather than lecturing. Baker (2000) renamed the term 'flipped classroom' after the concept of 'inverted classroom' suggested by Lage, Treglia, and Platt (2000). They observed that learning was more motivating for learners when it happened not only inside the classroom but also outside this environment. The modern use of online videos followed by face-to-face teaching is typically attributed to Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams. Since then, there has been increasing interest in the flipped instruction with new articles and press about the flipped approach appearing almost daily.

Flipped teaching inverts Bloom’s taxonomies to help learners reach higher-order thinking skills in the classroom. Bloom explains various domains of learning in his

taxonomy, from the basic retention of data to the knowledge application that creates something new (Lee & Lai, 2017). In a flipped teaching using Bloom's revised taxonomy, learners do the lower forms of cognitive activities, such as understanding and remembering outside of the classroom, and focus on the higher levels of cognitive activities in class, where they are supported by their teacher and peers. In flipped teaching, students move from remembering, the lowest level, to achieve creating, that is the highest level (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). Therefore, flipped classroom inverts Bloom's taxonomy to enhance interactions between learner and teacher and learners and peers.

Due to the incorporation of technologies in foreign language learning and teaching, it is now very important to language teachers to add technology in their language classrooms. Today, educators can make online videos to help students' learning. To mitigate the problems of teacher-made videos, some companies have developed tools for creating flipped teaching videos. Brand companies also have begun video software to let teachers connect with students.

2.3. Learning Attitudes and their evolution

Attitudes resulting from one's experiences are psychological orientations which can bring about a person's positive or negative view of situations (Mensah, Okyere, & Kuranchie, 2013) are the organizations and developments of individuals' beliefs, interests, feelings, preferences and behavioral inclinations and view towards an entity or situation (Vaughan & Hogg, 2005). This view of situations prompting individuals to respond whether positively or negatively to the surrounding situations (Mensah, Okyere, & Kuranchie, 2013) can elicit individuals' choice of actions and responses to challenges (Zelley, Marianne & Elaine, 2005). Based on the strength and potentiality of attitudes, Maio and Haddock (2010) divided attitudes into three interconnected components as Emotional components (how something is sensed); A cognitive component (how something is thought of); A behavioral components (how something is responded to).

Bandura arguing about the social learning theories and maintains that attitude are evolved when an individual observes, imitates and models other's behaviors. These acquired influential attributes then are inculcated through direct experience with models, object or issues or ideas upon which interactions take place. Research on teaching models has evidenced that individuals' behaviors are prompted by their attitudes which are in turn

the outcomes of personal view towards the efficacy, appeal and success of a model (Zimmerman, 2000). Positive attitude towards Mathematics can, for example, evolve when a learner learns how to link positive experiences or events with Mathematics which also can be reinforced by the development of positive attitude towards Mathematics (Mensah, Okyere, & Kuranchie, 2013).

2.4. Google Classroom

One of the programs for educators to create a digital class for learners to interact with their peers and teachers is Google Classroom. The program takes into account several factors, including simplifying the learner-teacher interaction, and the ease of delivering and grading assignments. Therefore, Google Classroom can be useful for both learners and teachers. Google Classroom can become a pedagogical tool to help in shifting the focus of the classroom from teacher-centered to a student-centered setting which is open to inquiry and creative thinking on the part of the students.

Google Classroom is a platform provided by Google Inc. which is used online to create lesson by teachers. The installation and application of Google Classroom is very easy and it is available freely for everybody. Teachers can create lessons, distribute assignments, post announcements, send feedback, and upload course materials for students to view. They can also monitor that the students have checked the assignments. Teachers, students, and their parents can access other Google tools such as Google forms, Docs, Slides, sheets, and so on. When students turn in assignments, the contents of each assignment can be highlighted by the teacher with instant constructive feedback. In this way students` assignments can be evaluated. In addition, the teacher can invite other colleagues to view the posts.

2.2. Previous Research on Flipped Teaching

Several investigations to date have taken the flipped teaching method and the learners' attitudes towards it into consideration. Many of these studies have done in the realm of majors other than English which shows the popularity of this model. Moreover, it seems that the research on flipped teaching has yielded different impacts on the students' academic achievement in different contexts as well as their cooperation in learning. For example, in a software engineering course, Gannod, Burge, and Helmick (2008) observed

that the learners were mostly satisfied with the method, however, some respondents did not support. A largely favorable opinion towards a flipped business program was also found (Schullery, Reck, & Schullery, 2011); however, about thirty percent of the students advocated a return to the traditional classroom.

Butt (2014) surveyed the students' views at the beginning and end of the course to examine their attitudes towards the flipped classroom structure and discovered that 75 percent of learners had a positive view of such teaching. A survey by Maher, Lipford, and Singh (2014) also showed that learners found flipping learning as an enjoyable experience. Muniandy (2018) investigated the effectiveness of flipped classroom on students` achievement and attitudes towards English language in secondary in Malaysia. In the research, the author found better achievement and attitudes on flipped classroom than traditional classroom. Likewise, the author recognized that flipped classroom provided greater opportunities of communication between peers and their teacher.

In a study by Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018) on English students` attitudes towards using flipped classrooms in language learning in Palestine, the authors used a questionnaire and found that participants considered flipped classroom as a motivating and engaging environment that could create better learning opportunities to achieve better learning outcomes for students. Moreover, the research did not find any negative impact of flipped classroom on students` learning. Likewise, there was some evidence of students` motivation.

In a pertinent study, Webb and Doman (2019) explored the students' self-reported attitudes towards language learning in the flipped classroom across three contexts of USA, Macau, and Colombia. The researchers used a mixed methods approach to collect data from a technology survey, focus group sessions, and reflective essays. The participants in the experimental groups in all three countries previewed lessons before each class through online videos. The findings indicated that the USA experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant difference in all self-reported attitudes in using technology for language learning. Between groups statistical analyses revealed that flipped classrooms experienced a significant different change in their attitudes on instrumentality, digital literacy, and anxiety. The participants in the Columbian and USA contexts indicated less anxiety about implementing technology for language learning in the flipped classroom. Generally, the flipped classroom had a positive impact on the students' attitudes towards technology in all three countries.

In an action research study conducted by Özkurkudis and Bümen (2019) in a Turkish university, which examined the students' performance in terms of grammar taught in the writing lessons using a flipped classroom model, the students expressed positive views about the flipped classroom model during the interviews. The model was considered time-saving, easily accessible, and distance education through videos was well-received by the students.

To explore EFL students' and teachers' attitudes towards the flipped classrooms in an Iranian university context, Vaezi, Afghari, and Lotfi (2019) used a mixed-method research approach. They selected 204 Iranian EFL instructors and 80 male and female advanced EFL learners majoring in English teaching, translation, and literature. The participants answered the flipped teaching questionnaires. Afterward, ten percent of the participants (8 students and 20 teachers) participated in the follow-up interview. The results of the questionnaires indicated that most of the students had positive attitudes towards the flipped teaching classes. The instructors also had positive perceptions about the flipped classrooms on the whole. The interviews confirmed the mentioned findings as the instructors and students generally preferred the flipped classrooms and they had positive perceptions about the use of this approach.

In another research by Karimi and Hamzavi (2017) they investigated the effect of flipped model of instruction on EFL learners` reading comprehension. In their study they concerned the learners` attitudes towards flipped instruction on 60 Iranian EFL learners. The results of their study showed the positive attitudes of learners towards flipped instruction. They taught that flipped model helped them improve their reading comprehension ability. Most participants of the study agreed that flipped instruction had helped their communication skills and as a result they viewed it as a successful model of teaching. Flipped model helped them opportunities to communicate in language classrooms.

Enfield (2013) investigated flipped classroom in two classes at California State University Northridge to see its effectiveness. To accomplish the goal, 50 students participated in the study in a survey to collect the data. The data showed the students made positive comments about flipped classroom. They claimed that the videos were helpful, engaging, and challenging.

Although there are numerous research papers related to online or blended classrooms, the number of studies focusing on Google Classroom is still limited. Some studies have done concerning the properties of Google Classroom and or acceptance of Google Classroom for the students. A study by Saeed Al-Maroof and Al-Emran (2018) examined factors that affect acceptance of Google Classroom. They believed that these factors needed to be clearly specified and discussed therefore they collected data through a questionnaire and proved that all the factors were significantly effective in terms of both the behavioral intention and the actual usage of Google Classroom. Determining the factors helped develop the learning activities of the students.

In the Asian context, Khalil (2018) investigated the attitudes of EFL learners regarding the use of Google Classroom in a Palestinian university via questionnaires and interviews. The findings of the investigation revealed that the participants preferred the use of Google Applications for their future courses. Furthermore, the findings showed an establishment of collaborative learning environment during the interactions of students to teacher and their peers. Majority of the participants favored using Google Classroom for their future courses regarding the instant feedback provided by teachers.

In another study, Ginting (2018) explored the impact of flipped teaching approach via teaching video through Google Classroom on the students' academic writing ability. The participants were 60 university students in Indonesia who were divided into a treatment group, who received the flipped learning instruction, and a control group, who were exposed to the traditional teaching. The result indicated the significant influence of flipped teaching approach on the students' writing skill.

Having reviewed the studies related to the flipped teaching the researcher could conclude that implementing these models has a positive effect on the learners' achievement in different subjects and at different levels; however, this practice has sometimes yielded different impacts on the students' academic achievement in different contexts. Different aspects of using the flipped teaching model in foreign language teaching have been explored, including the learners' attitudes towards the flipped teaching model. However, the review of the related literature yielded that few attempts specifically compare students in both the flipped and traditional modality via Google Classroom across the areas of listening comprehension and the learners' views, particularly in an Iranian EFL setting.

Consequently, the current investigation tried to address the gap in the studies by addressing the following research question:

RQ. What are the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards flipped teaching via Google Classroom?

3. Methodology

In the methodology section the researchers describe the design of the study, the participants' characteristics, the instruments, and procedure. Finally, they explain data analysis.

3.1 Design of the Study

This is a descriptive study. The data for the study was collected through a questionnaire. The present study had a quantitative design to achieve the intended objective, which was examining the Iranian intermediate EFL learners` attitudes towards flipped teaching.

3.2. Participants

Forty intermediate female EFL students participated in the study who were selected from among 200 language learners attending a foreign language learning program in the training department of the NIOC in Masjid Suleiman, Khuzestan province. The participants' general foreign language proficiency was examined through Quick Oxford Placement Test at the beginning of the study and 40 learners whose score fell within the range 37-47 were considered to be at intermediate level and were selected as the main sample of the study. Then, they were randomly assigned to two groups, since having 40 students in a single class was not possible. Their ages were within the range of 19 to 29 years old.

Table 1 shows the demographic data of the participants:

Table 1.

Demographics of the Participants

No. of Students	40
Gender	Female
Native Language	Persian
Institute	The National Iranian Oil Company
Academic Year	June-September 2018

3.3. Instruments

The instruments employed in the investigation are explained below:

3.3.1. Flipped Teaching Attitude Questionnaire

Learners' perceptions and experiences of the flipped learning were measured using a paper-based questionnaire adapted from Roth and Suppasetseree (2016). The learners in the experimental group took part in the survey at the end of the investigation. They were required to answer the twenty items of the questionnaire in 20 minutes. The responses were based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree=5, agree=4, neutral=3, disagree=2 and strongly disagree=1. Two experts in TEFL examined the content validity of the questionnaire. Moreover, the internal consistency within the items of the questionnaire was estimated through giving the questionnaire to the pilot study group and running Cronbach's Alpha to the results of the pilot study to estimate the questionnaire reliability.

3.3.2. Google Classroom

In Google classrooms, the participants of the study received the instruction on listening skill through handouts, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, and online videos. They also listened to the audio files according to their preferred time and need and then they were required to answer some questions that examined their listening comprehension before they attended the class. During the class, the participants were encouraged to ask and answer questions about the content and were engaged in learning activities where they practiced what they had learned before. The teacher taught the lesson out of the class time, guided the learners to do their homework in class collaboratively, and encouraged them to have lots of interaction with peers. However, for the first experimental group the focus was also on teaching how to think critically and improving their listening comprehension through flipped classroom. The learners in this group were required to process information from different sources that were available through flipped classroom and then critically processed information to construct knowledge. In fact, the purpose was to help learners develop and apply critical thinking skills in daily learning. To this end, they were encouraged to integrate different elements of critical thinking skills into their learning process in flipped classrooms.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Both groups received the flipped teaching of listening comprehension through using Google Classroom. The treatment was employed for 90 days during the summer semester in 2018. Finally, a paper-based attitude questionnaire adapted from Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) was used to determine the learners' experience with the flipped teaching via Google Classroom. Due to time and cost constraints of developing a new questionnaire, the previously developed questionnaire by Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) was used to assess the learners` attitudes towards flipped teaching. Since the original questionnaire did not fully align with the research purpose, some kind of adaptation such as deletion and rewording of the items were applied to suit the current Iranian EFL situation.

At the beginning of the investigation, in a briefing session before the study, the teacher trained the participants in both groups on flipped teaching through Google Classroom. Before the class began, the teacher explained the course pedagogy to represent the flipped classroom model. The teacher explained how Google Classroom worked using available laptops and she went online and reviewed all the details and showed them some examples illustrating the model. The students got the PIN to be able to access Google Classroom. The students were required to download the materials three nights before each session and they watched the videos at home. They also were required to take notes and brought their questions to the classroom. The teacher encouraged the learners to watch the videos and study the PowerPoint slides.

Then the students worked through what they watched, did the related activities, participated in discussions, and asked the teacher questions to help them understand the concepts taught. In the class, the teacher monitored, guided, and supported the learning process of the students. The teacher provided some problem-solving activities to allow students to tackle problems with their peers. They are then provided some feedback. In the group activities, the students used their knowledge to produce new understanding and better recall the content. The students were also given some worksheets to practice them.

After class, the teacher first reviewed the students` works and gave comments, and then uploaded the results of the review in Google Classroom. The main goal of after-class activities for both groups was to extend the learners' learning. These activities were directed in a way to help learners continue their learning outside of class. The learners

were asked to continue their collaborative practices out of class and to revise their learning and thinking. They were asked to upload their exercises on the Google Classroom to view and give some feedback to each other. Moreover, activities were given to help learners to prepare them for the next instructional activities that were done in the classroom.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

To provide the answer to the research question and to gain insights into EFL learners' attitudes towards flipped teaching via Google Classroom and inspect their perceptions in a flipped teaching environment, the ratings made for the items of the attitude questionnaire was examined in terms of frequencies and percentages. It was done to determine the extent that the flipped teaching model affects EFL learners to improve their listening comprehension. Besides, item statistics were done to get an in-depth analysis of the learners' perceptions about their experiences with the flipped teaching model. The reliability of the questionnaires was established through running Cronbach's Alpha to the items of the questionnaires to estimate the internal consistency within items.

4. Results

The students' questionnaire was utilized to know their attitudes towards flipped classroom via Google Classroom. The reliability index of the questionnaire was .72 which is acceptable and the results of item statistics for this questionnaire are in Table 2.

Table 2.

Item Statistics for the Attitude Questionnaire (Means and Standard Deviations)

	Mean	SD	N
1. Learning English via the Flipped Classroom (FC), I can learn outside the classroom and solve the problems myself.	4.000	.877	40
2. Learning English via FC, I have opportunities to control my learning.	4.225	.733	40
3. Learning English via FC, I am more self-directed.	4.000	.679	40
4. Learning English via FC, I can study at my own pace due to availability and accessibility of all necessary online resources.	4.375	.704	40
5. Learning English via FC encourages me to work with my classmates due to mutual projects and group work.	4.575	.500	40
6. Learning English via FC, I contact my teacher more often even outside the classroom.	4.575	.500	40
7. Learning English via FC helps group learning or group discussion both online and offline	4.600	.496	40

8. Learning English via FC, I receive academic information from teacher faster.	4.525	.505	40
9. Learning English via FC, I can distribute knowledge to classmates more quickly and effectively.	4.450	.503	40
10. FC provides very online learning materials.	4.525	.505	40
11. FC is suitable for student-centered learning.	4.100	.744	40
12. FC is suitable for learning English for pre-university level.	2.325	.971	40
13. Learning via FC helps me to infer the situation and events by using the real-world knowledge.	3.250	1.031	40
14. Learning via FC helps me summarize some events.	2.825	.873	40
15. Learning via FC helps me reflect on some events.	2.650	.802	40
16. Learning via FC, I can guess the meaning of the words from the contexts.	4.075	.729	40
17. Learning via FC, I can understand the meanings of the target language.	4.575	.549	40
18. Frequently watching English video via FC, I can develop my listening skills.	4.550	.597	40
19. Visual aids (pictures in the video) via FC help me to understand more what the spoken text in the video is.	4.300	.563	40
20. I prefer learning English via FC to improve my listening comprehension.	4.475	.505	40

The ratings made by the respondents in both groups for the items of the attitude questionnaire were examined in terms of frequencies and percentages. The analysis of the students' ratings revealed that in general, they made the highest rating for the seventh item that inspected the participants' attitudes towards the effective role of flipped class in helping the language learners for group learning or group discussion both online and offline. Items 5, 6, and 17 looked at the respondents' perceptions of the role of flipped class in encouraging group work with the classmates due to mutual projects, contacting with their teacher more often even outside the classroom, and being able to understand the meanings of the target language. In contrast, the lowest mean ranks were reported for items 12, 15, and 14, respectively. These items evaluated the respondents' viewpoints towards the appropriateness of flipped class for learning English for pre-university level, helping them to reflect on some events, and helping them to summarize some events. Table 3 depicts the ratings made by the individuals for each item of the attitude questionnaire.

Table 3.

Students' Ratings for the Items of the Attitude Questionnaire

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
1. Learning English via the Flipped Classroom (FC), I am able to learn outside the classroom and solve the problems myself.	0	7.5	15	47.5	30
2. Learning English via FC, I have opportunities to control my own learning.	0	0	17.5	42.5	40
3. Learning English via FC, I am more self-	0	0	22.5	55	22.5

directed.					
4. Learning English via FC, I can study at my own pace due to availability and accessibility of all necessary online resources.	0	0	12.5	37.5	50
5. Learning English via FC encourages me to work with my classmates due to mutual projects and group work.	0	0	0	42.5	57.5
6. Learning English via FC, I contact with my teacher more often even outside the classroom.	0	0	0	42.5	57.5
7. Learning English via FC helps group learning or group discussion both online and offline	0	0	0	40	60
8. Learning English via FC, I receive academic information from teacher faster.	0	0	0	47.5	52.5
9. Learning English via FC, I can distribute knowledge to classmates more quickly and effectively.	0	0	0	55	45
10. FC provides very online learning materials.	0	0	0	47.5	52.5
11. FC is suitable for student-centered learning.	0	0	22.5	45	32.5
12. FC is suitable for learning English for pre-university level.	25	27.5	37.5	10	0
13. Learning via FC helps me to infer the situation and events by using the real world knowledge.	7.5	15	27.5	45	5
14. Learning via FC helps me summarize some events.	5	30	45	17.5	2.5
15. Learning via FC helps me reflect on some events.	7.5	32.5	47.5	12.5	0
16. Learning via FC, I am able to guess the meaning of the words from the contexts.	0	0	22.5	47.5	30
17. Learning via FC, I am able to understand the meanings of the target language.	0	0	2.5	37.5	60
18. Frequently watching English video via FC, I am able to develop my listening skills.	0	0	5	35	60
19. Visual aids (pictures in the video) via FC help me to understand more what the spoken text in video is.	0	0	5	60	35
20. I prefer learning English via FC to improve my listening comprehension.	0	0	0	52.5	47.5

As it was shown in Table 3, more than half of the students liked flipped class because when they faced some problems, they could learn to solve them outside the classroom. Many of them found flipped learning useful in providing opportunities for them to control their learning. Besides, some reflected that learning English via flipped class, they were more self-directed. Two-thirds of the survey respondents reported that they could study at their own pace due to the accessibility and availability of online resources. All of the

participants rated that flipped class encouraged them to interact with their classmates due to the group work and mutual projects. Besides, all of them rated that learning English through flipped class helped them communicate with their instructor more often even outside the classroom and received academic information from teacher faster. They also rated that flipped learning provided very online learning materials and they could distribute knowledge to classmates more effectively and quickly.

When it comes to the suitability of the flipped class for student-centered learning, a few of the respondents used the neutral response option. Despite that, many of them agreed or strongly agreed that the flipped class was suitable for learner-centered learning. Concerning the suitability of the flipped class for learning English for pre-university level, simply a few of them strongly agreed with it. In contrast, some selected neutral response option and nearly half of them strongly disagreed or disagreed with it.

When asked about the role of flipped class in helping language learners infer the events and situation by utilizing the real-world knowledge, half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with it. In comparison, about one-fourths selected the neutral option and almost one-fourths disagreed or strongly disagreed with this idea. The respondents held a somewhat negative view towards the role of flipped class in helping them summarize some events. While nearly half of them selected the neutral option, simply a few of them agreed or strongly agreed with it.

Similarly, when asked about the role of flipped class in helping language learners reflect on some events, half of the respondents, selected the neutral option. While two-fifths of them disagreed or strongly disagreed with the effective role of flipped class on helping learners reflect on events, simply a few of them agreed with it. Many respondents reflected positive attitudes towards the role of flipped class in assisting language learners to guess the words meaning from the contexts and a few of them selected neutral option. Nearly all of them rated that flipped class enabled them to comprehend the meanings of the target language. Besides, many of them agreed or strongly agreed that watching English videos through flipped teaching enabled them to develop their listening skills. In a similar vein, many respondents agreed or strongly agreed that visual aids used in the flipped classes helped them to understand more what the spoken text in video was. Finally, all of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they preferred learning English via FC to improve their listening comprehension.

5. Discussion

The current investigation adopted a quantitative methodology to meet the objective of the study. The research question looked at the participants' attitudes of the flipped classes via Google Classroom that was reflected through their ratings for the 20 items of the attitude questionnaire. By a quantitative analysis of the learners' responses to the attitude questionnaire, it was found that learners could touch the significance of flipped teaching in their improvement of listening skill since they kept positive attitudes about the treatment sessions. They believed in the effective role of flipped teaching in the feedback provided for them outside the classroom. They also felt more control over their learning because of having their own pace due to the availability and accessibility of online courses. Generally, they felt more interaction with their peers due to the group work and mutual projects. They had positive perception of the feedback provided by their teacher. In the present study, there is no evidence that flipped teaching negatively impact student's learning. Therefore, the flipped classroom is beneficial to students and it should be encouraged. In a flipped teaching that supports the ideas of constructivism, learners are enabled to take part in interactive, collaborative, and creative activities while they are engaged in knowledge construction (Fulton, 2012).

Furthermore, flipped teaching was found to be more helpful in fostering the students' reflection in doing the activities, and promoted their autonomy by enabling them to solve the problems outside the classroom. This could be due to the out-of-class activities, which is also revealed in Strayer`s (2012) investigation, through which flipped classroom could promote the learners' autonomous and cooperative learning as they were provided with different materials to learn from. The evidence from several studies on students` perception towards flipped classroom showed the same results of this study. For example, the findings of this study are in line with the findings of Butt (2014) who showed positive views of students towards flipped classroom at the end of study. The present findings also support Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018) study which concluded that flipped classroom promoted the students` responsibilities in a learner centered classroom and promoted their interactive manner with their peers.

In addition, the results of this study on students` attitudes towards the flipped teaching are in harmony with Muniandy`s (2018) results that showed the effectiveness of flipped classroom on students` achievement and attitudes. Similarly, the results are similar

to Khalil (2018) who showed the collaborative learning environment in the interactive setting of flipped teaching. The results of this study demonstrated that the students valued group work and mutual projects in which they collaborated together.

The yielded results confirm the findings by Karimi and Hamzavi (2017) that showed students` attitudes towards using the flipped classroom strategy in EFL class were positive based on students` responses to a questionnaire. Similarly, Enfield (2013) stated that most comments of the participants were positive. Several students had found videos helpful, engaging, and challenging. The results are also in agreement with the studies by Webb and Doman (2019) and Özkurkudis and Bümen (2019) that show the positive change in students` attitudes towards flipped classroom.

Generally, the outcomes of the present research are in consistence with those of the previous investigations (e.g. Baker, 2000; Bates & Galloway, 2012; Butt, 2014; Gannod, Burge, & Helmick, 2008; Lage, Treglia, & Platt, 2000; Maher, Lipford, & Singh, 2014), which discovered the positive attitudes of the learners towards flipped teaching. Moreover, other study conducted by Khalil (2018) also indicated that the students' attitudes toward the Google Classroom were in the "good" level, and they preferred the use of Google Applications for their future courses.

6. Conclusion

The current research benefitted from a quantitative methodology to investigate the learners' perceptions of the flipped classes via Google Classroom. The findings demonstrated that the students' attitudes towards flipped teaching were positive since the majority believed in the favorable role of flipped teaching in fostering their motivation in learning and encouraging their classroom engagement. Their attitudes were mostly directed toward reflective and autonomous learning as a result of flipped teaching as well.

The pedagogical significance of this study is multifaceted and can be examined both at micro and macro levels. Regarding the usefulness of the results at the macro level, it can be said that more areas of inquiry were identified to help curriculum designers realize the remarkable changes of learning environments and the influence on learning and teaching pedagogy. Syllabus designers and material developers can implement the language tasks in a way that teachers are expected to utilize technology as a means to present the materials before the face to face class. The findings of this investigation may assist policy makers in

emphasizing the significance of the use of different approaches to the skills instruction. Education policymakers and university administrators, focusing on educational quality for advancing education equity, may need to modify their policies and practices. They may be driven towards establishing interactive learning and teaching communities to support flipped teaching for students in the direction of developing the educational condition and having more learner-centered environments.

Moreover, it seems that students, teachers, teacher trainers, institutes, and researchers can also benefit from the outcomes of the present study. Learners are considered as the first beneficiary of the findings. Many learners appear to be worried about their listening ability and are usually concerned with their listening skill as well as their grades in listening exam. Being taught through flipped classroom, learners can develop their listening comprehension since they are exposed to an interactive and reflective learning environment in which they seem to be more interested to enhance their learning opportunities by practice and repetition. When learners are aware of their listening skill, they can take necessary action to solve the possible deficiencies in listening as well as strengthening their listening ability.

Teachers, who are always concerned with teaching language skills, can benefit from working with computer and mobile devices for their flipped instruction. Technology-mediated instruction through flipped teaching can assist them to achieve their goals by involving the learners' in the communicative context of learning, which makes the learning setting more enjoyable for the learners. Professional trainers also need to design teacher training programs and workshops to raise the teachers' awareness of the existing differences among the students and offer pedagogies to contribute teachers in teaching and managing their flipped teaching classes.

As institutes focus on effective teaching and learning of language skills and sub-skills, they can benefit from flipped teaching by preparing the necessary infrastructures and raising the learners' awareness of using technology in education, which can be beneficial for both instructors and students to improve their teaching and learning qualities. Finally, the researcher hopes that this study will have far-reaching conclusions which can be practical and helpful for the researchers who are interested in the flipped teaching model because it provides them with current literature on the topic. The researcher believes that this study can contribute to putting English language courses and objectives more in line

with the modern approaches to language teaching, particularly for the Iranian context in which only traditional instructions are made use of and the real-world needs of the students are almost completely neglected.

The findings of the present investigation should be generalized with care as the sample and context are not representative of the whole population of the Iranian English learners in different settings. No research is done in ideal condition and this study is not an exception. Due to the gender segregation, female learners from the training department of the NIOC in Masjid Suleiman were only selected as the participants of the study. The present study was also done with the participation of small sample due the time and the course of the training department at the NIOC, as well as the research instruments applied in the study. Since IELTS listening test was used in the study, the number of items for each section was fixed and out of the researcher control. The study was also limited to the context of the NIOC in Masjid Suleiman, from which the researcher selected the participants. Guaranteeing that all the participants were technologically educated was another limitation of the study.

Thus, further research can be carried out to explore other variables, such as different learning environments such as language institutes, different levels of proficiency, and other language skills as well. Further research can be done with the participation of a larger sample which also considers gender differences affected by flipped teaching. Moreover, the teachers' perceptions of using flipped teaching in the classroom can be explored. Finally, the impact of flipped teaching on other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing can also be investigated.

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