



A Study of EFL Students' Satisfaction towards a Flipped Classroom in Vietnam: Basis for Program Development

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate the satisfaction of undergraduates from a university in Vietnam. Ninety-nine students participated in the study during the first term of the academic year 2021 - 2022. This study has the baseline from a cooperation between two universities in Thailand and Vietnam, of which a specially designed course was organized for Vietnamese students under the instruction and supervision of a Thai lecturer and a Vietnamese one. A questionnaire was utilized for data collection with two main parts (1) the participants' basic information about their exposure to English, their cohorts, their ages, and so on, and (2) their satisfaction with a flipped classroom. The data analysis was conducted using frequency, percentages, standard deviation, and means. In the findings, the three most rated levels of satisfaction were found with the means of 4.01, 3.95, and 3.94 respectively for the usefulness of language learners' experience in the learning process, the diversity of effective resourceful topics, and the benefits of having more discussions in the flipped classroom. Therefore, a flipped classroom can be regarded as an alternative that could be employed both in different contexts with activities off-campus and in the classroom. In that sense, a digital technology additional to traditional contexts might be able to transform old-fashioned instructional features besides the other classroom formats to better both group learning and the individual one.

Keywords: *English as a Foreign Language, Flipped classroom, Students' satisfaction, Undergraduates*

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the English language is still considered an important enhancement to ESL/EFL learners since it can be the lingua franca of global communication from different perspectives. This language was the mother tongue of over some hundred million people and the second one of over seven hundred fifty million users worldwide. Additionally, this official language, English, is also used in more than 60 states and territories around the world. Therefore, it is considered a common communicative language used for information exchange between people in different countries in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Apart from the goal of communication, its role in educational settings is immensely monumental.

Over the years, approaches and strategies employed in the development of skills are frequently discussed in the literature. However, one of the most prominent theoretical and conceptual frameworks is a flipped classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to consider practical approaches to how the skills in academic settings are best enhanced in a flipped classroom to encourage optimal practice.

A flipped classroom is considered an educational innovation that is consistent with the learning skills of learners in the 21st century (Saisit, 2019). It is concerned with a self-study platform outside the classroom and various learning activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Bergmann & Sams (2012) proposed six important characteristics regarding a flipped classroom: 1) clearly defining the learning objectives, 2) considering a variety of teaching methods, 3) determining which parts of the content should be taken into consideration, 4) ensuring that learners have access to educational materials created in the subject matter without obstacles, 5) organizing learning activities that focus on allowing learners to do in the classroom together with the group, and 6) establishing a variety of assessment methods.

Some researchers believed that a flipped classroom can be advantageous to learners. According to Reidsema, Hadgraft, & Kavanagh (2017), learners take a proactive role in understanding their learning. It



thus enhances new experiences that integrate with the learners' prior knowledge (Panich, 2014) and also supports learning according to their potential (Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

More specifically, the flipped classroom when used in an EFL setting allows learners to solve problems that they are facing by effectively precipitating their own thoughts. Besides, the approach is suitable for this era where learners can learn on their own, and if they do not understand anything, they can ask instructors for a better understanding of that knowledge in a face-to-face environment.

Rad, Roohani, and Domakani (2021) also proposed the teaching procedures. In the role-reversal flipped classroom, around a hundred-minute section was designed for a week-time interval. Additionally, before every class meeting, participants were required to watch different videos in association with some quizzes for each video. A quiz was used to make sure that learners will watch these videos. The class time will be then spent on several activities: watching the videos, problem-solving, and explaining the features of writing.

It can be concluded that the flipped classroom is obviously effective in the area of education or pedagogy related to foreign languages. Several ideas and concepts have been proposed for the sake of an alternative for EFL teachers.

Therefore, investigating the satisfaction of undergraduates in a university context in Vietnam becomes the major purpose of this study. In this research context with special international cooperation between a university in Thailand and another from Vietnam, a study about students' satisfaction would specify different strengths and weaknesses of the flipped classroom in this case so that the involved counterparts in the study including teachers, students, and the universities in both sides of the cooperation would be able to revisit the concepts, understand the reality from learners' perspectives, and modify the future performance for better modifications.

2. Research Methods

A survey research design was adopted in a mixed-method study with a major quantitative section and a minor qualitative one for collecting the participants' verbal feedback. The additional qualitative section allowed the researchers to explore the ideas which the questionnaire might not successfully cover in the study. The deeper layers of opinions would provide a better understanding of students' feedback for the whole teaching process. In this procedure, a questionnaire was mainly used to describe the participants' attitudes, their opinions about the flipped classroom, their behaviors in the context, or their characteristics related to the investigating aspects. The research instrument was adopted from the work of Alamri (2019). This version of the questionnaire was then validated by several experts in the English-teaching field. For the sample selection, purposive sampling was applied from the natural designs of participants in a course on problem-solving and professional skills. The current study has participants with a high level of English proficiency for the online learning platform which was organized and instructed by both of these research authors. Ninety-nine sophomores (55% of the whole population) participated in this research context, out of which about fifteen percent of the participants were male and the rest ones were female (about 85%). This means that when distributing the questionnaires, just half of the participants returned their responses. The major group of the respondents was 20-21 years old (83%). About half of the respondents (49%) belong to the group of learners with their exposure time to English learning from five to ten years. Lastly, about the grades, around 61.6% of the respondents have achieved within the range from 3.00 to 4.00. The information about grades would be meaningless in any normal educational setting. However, in this cooperation with a flipped classroom, being organized by teachers of different nationalities and different teaching methods, the meaning of grades reflects the effectiveness and mutual understanding of both instructors in this case to the student's performance throughout the international course design.

The data, which was then interpreted and categorized, would be found in the following parts:

Part I: The participants' background information was analyzed in frequency and percentage.

Part II: The participants' satisfaction was identified, categorized, and explored from data in a series of close-ended questions focusing on frequencies, the percentage, standard deviations, and the means.

Part III: Their feedback on a flipped classroom



4. Results

This section presents the analyses of the data collection in the study from the questionnaire.

4.1 General information of respondents

The data presents those participants belong to three different age groups, of which four-fifths of the population (82%) are from 20 to 21 years old.

Table 1 Age groups

Age groups	Number of Students	Percentage
18-19 years old	16	16%
20 -21 years old	81	82%
22-25 years old	2	2%
More than 25 years old	0	0%
Total	99	100%

From Table 1, the age group of 20 - 21 years old is the most popular, followed by the age of 18 – 19 (16%, n=99).

Table 2 the exposure time to English learning

Exposure time to English learning	N° of Students	Percentage
3-5 years	16	16%
5-10 years	49	50%
10+ years	34	34%
Total	99	100%

Table 2 revealed that about half of the respondents have been learning this language for around 5-10 years, followed by the group of participants that have learned English for more than ten years (34%).

Table 3 Grade Average

Grade Average	Number of Students	Percentage
0.00-0.99	1	1%
1.00-1.99	13	13%
2.00-2.99	35	35%
3.00-4.00	50	50%
Total	99	100%

In Table 3, the major group of respondents (around 50%) achieved grades from 3.00 to 4.00. In an international course with different instructors from different countries, when students can gain certain achievements, it means that their adaptation to the course is effective and visible for a positive factor of satisfaction.

4.2 Satisfaction toward a flipped classroom

Table 4 Respondents' satisfaction (Adapted from Alamri, 2019)

Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Order
This course in the flipped classroom was a useful learning experience	4.01	0.80	1
The diversity of topics and resources in this course prompted me to participate effectively	3.95	0.84	2
Discussions in the flipped classroom assisted me in understanding other points of view	3.94	0.85	3



Statements	\bar{x}	S.D.	Order
The flipped classroom helped me learn more than I would have if we had completed]	3.92	0.82	4
The instructor for this course met my learning expectations	3.90	0.85	5
I was able to learn from the course materials in the flipped classroom	3.87	0.74	6
The learning activities and assignments of this course met my learning expectations	3.87	0.75	7
I invested a great deal of effort to search for topics on the internet to increase my participation in this course	3.85	0.90	8
This flipped classroom course met my learning expectations	3.82	0.90	9
I was stimulated to complete additional readings or research on topics discussed in the course	3.76	0.82	10
I found it easy to pace myself successfully through this course	3.70	0.85	11
As a result of my experience with this course, I would like to take another flipped classroom	3.65	0.92	12
The flipped classroom helped me learn more than I would have if we had completed traditional lessons	3.62	1.00	13
My level of learning that occurred in this course was of the highest quality	3.49	1.01	14

As presented in Table 4, the common agreement was found with the three most rated levels of satisfaction. The satisfaction found to be the most rated is “This course in the flipped classroom was a useful learning experience” ($\bar{x} = 4.01$). The second one is “The diversity of topics and resources in this course prompted me to participate effectively” ($\bar{x} = 3.95$). The third one is “Discussions in the flipped classroom assisted me in understanding other points of view” ($\bar{x} = 3.94$). The least rated satisfaction is “My level of learning that occurred in this course was of the highest quality” ($\bar{x} = 3.49$).

Aside from the three top-rated opinions, the participants’ satisfaction was presented as relatively high in the rest of the testing items. Of which, the lowest mean at 3.49 indicated that learners perceived their learning achievement during flipped classrooms were of the highest quality. In addition, in the sixth highest perception, the participants confirmed that they learned from the course materials with the lowest standard derivation (SD = 0.74) which means that point has more agreement than the other factors.

4.3 Respondents’ feedback toward a flipped classroom

Apart from the quantitative results from the questionnaire, the open-ended section returned with the participants’ descriptions of their experiences in taking the course in the flipped classroom. Several elements of the flipped classroom environment were discussed, and the responses focused on different perspectives regarding the effectiveness of this learning design. The participants declared their learning enhancement in correlation with the course materials, the effectiveness of peer discussions, and the instructor’s role. The online learning materials helped them cover and understand the lesson content easier when they were prepared well before the class discussions. That phenomenon also showed the demand of reading more about the topic from a variety of sources so that learners in the research context were intentionally encouraged to expand their understanding. In fact, the participants have actively participated in almost all classroom discussions. Some of the feedback is as follows:

“In my perspective, the overall course online with high-technological devices can help teachers and students overcome many difficulties of the pandemic, create a larger community of participants worldwide. In addition, online education will enhance us to be better at Information Technology and problem solving related to digital applications.” [Extract #1]

From the first extract, it is inevitable the negative influences of the current pandemic. However, the combination of high-tech devices with effective classroom activities would provide better chances for students and teachers to work efficiently in any context. Suitable choices of good online educational applications would solve the situations better.



“Although online-based learning is a huge disadvantage for both teachers and students, they also provide a great experience. First, the creative course imparts knowledge with fascinating activities, which does not cause boredom in the learning process. Next, brainstorming ideas during group work helps each team member have the opportunity to expand their mind and eyes. All in all, there's a lot of new things in the classroom, which leaves an amazing impression.” [Extract #2]

As shared in the second extract, different advantages have been drawn out to signify the benefits of the flipped classroom. Participants in the research context valued the creativeness essence of this form of education. Students tend to enjoy the activities in which they can help each other and explore new things. From that, they became more interested in learning and got rid of the tediousness in some cases of traditional instruction. Online learning in the form of the flipped classroom can also create more opportunities for students to experience and expand their exposure to different learning resources which they can learn and “open their minds” easier. It also means that learning within some fixed boundaries would limit learners a lot from which they may be able to explore the real amazing world.

“I think the content of traditional teaching is packaged in books and what is received in a class by the teacher. With online learning, I can access knowledge from many different sources, that are, teachers, books, newspapers, videos, images, open learning materials, and learning via the internet. Learning based on the connection of the internet, teachers, and students can both participate in the class that is opened on the system through a tablet computer or smartphone with an internet connection. When logging into the system, the space is organized like a classroom, teachers can directly teach learners or assign exercises, store lectures, learning materials in different formats such as Word, PDF, Video, etc. I can follow online lectures or study at any time, submit assignments to teachers, discuss in forums, take quizzes, essays, etc. Right and wrong, etc... Having access to a new teaching method that is more attractive than the traditional reading-copying method; The interaction between teachers and students has also improved significantly, I have more opportunities to express their own views and opinions; Help teachers understand more about the capacity, personality, and level of knowledge acquisition of students, thereby making appropriate and scientific adjustments to promote the development of the capacity of each learner.” [Extract #3]

It is obvious that the participants in the study were quite fond of having something new and different for their learning context. As in the third feedback, the negative sides of packaged knowledge in books and passive one-way instructing methods have brought students various perspectives. When flipped classrooms can focus more on skill development for language learning, the core of content education has created different obsolete concentrations. In fact, although many people may not have sufficient conditions for online learning or any other forms of the flipped classroom, it is undeniable that the Internet and online conditions allow both teachers and learners to access knowledge and construct theirs so much easier.

Also, it is believed that learning can happen from any sort of data from not only the teachers, but also from books, newspapers, videos, images, stories, and so on from vast sources. In that sense, learning with the combination or the addition of the Internet connection would direct both teachers and learners to a new world of experiences with exercises, digital lectures, unlimited learning materials, and especially the communication process would be at ease. That condition would simultaneously create the need to renovate classroom instruction and the interaction or relationship between teachers and students should also be revisited.

All in all, from the informative feedback and the aforementioned data from Table 4, both sources of qualitative data and somehow quantitative data have confirmed the participants’ positive attitudes toward the good sides of the flipped classroom. Regardless of the three top-rated opinions about this matter, learners can



learn from more than they can expect. Almost all participants agreed that their satisfaction with the course would be really high since they can experience different forms of learning with useful and effective instructing activities.

5. Discussions

Upon designing learning activities in an academic setting classroom, several scholars and instructors have suggested a guideline for teaching academic writing skills with the use of a flipped classroom.

To begin with, Cockrum (2014) mentioned three main elements: instruction delivered asynchronously through video, podcast, or interactive books with fast and intermediate access to the demanded information, and the availability of the instructors during class time to successfully facilitate learners' learning, cooperation, and contribution to new knowledge and skills. The flipped setting for the classrooms in this research is somehow different from Cockrum (2014) in terms of the flipped tools although the core requirements were maintained. In this context, the similarity was that the activities were designed to combine different forms of instructions from direct lectures in online meetings, interactive applications, videos, and so on.

With a variety of activities from both lecturers of the course, the flipped class was able to improve students' skills and enhance the diverse involvements through successful technological applications throughout the course. This feature shares Bouchefra (2015) at some points. Bouchefra (2015) also suggested an instructional framework based on the use of a flipped classroom. It can be said that apart from a well-designed learning objective, technology has an important role in learners' skills, especially writing. When involving the transferable information, accessible resources, and diversified ideas among learners, it is also believed that the successful application and implementation of the model or the educational method, entitled to a flipped classroom would need some special considerations and preparations in advance. That would have in the list with relatively short videos (twenty minutes/ each). Additionally, the course content should also be briefly reviewed before the class meetings. In that case, it is considered necessary for almost every learner to gain a sufficient understanding of their learning materials.

One of the featured satisfaction in this study was recognizing the proper teaching procedures as in Bouchefra (2015). The participants in the study were able to experience different steps and activities so that they can be involved in the flipped classroom. When they need to study before or after the class, videos are ready for them. When they want to discuss with their friends or deliver some feedback, platforms are ready for them. When they need to be tested for their understanding, questions and some applications were utilized for that purpose. In fact, the procedures in this study were not exactly the same as in Bouchefra (2015) but it shared the major proposed the teaching procedures using a flipped as follows:

- 1) Informing learners about the adoption of the flipped classroom approach and how to use it
- 2) Preparing a video lesson that lasted between 14 and 17 minutes in which a definition provided that learners are about to tackle, detailed its different structural and organizational characteristics, and analyzed
- 3) Checking learners' understanding by posing questions at different stages of the videos
- 4) Using digital platforms like Padlet for group discussion
- 5) Providing feedback through an online platform.

To further discuss the different roles of the educational counterparts in the flipped classrooms, Rad, Roohani, and Domakani (2021) introduced the EFL classroom using the concept of the flipped classroom with the reversed roles of the teachers and the pedagogical models with the proper enhancement of discussions. The classroom described in Rad et al. (2021) is well compatible with this study in terms of effectively exploiting the features of the flipped models for classes. The major features of the model are as follows:

- 1) First exposure: before each class meeting, the video should be delivered while the details will be discussed, explored, and explained during class time.



2) Engagement: the participants should be engaged in learning to write with a focus on essay writing. In the classroom activities both off-campus and in-class scenarios, the teachers should pay attention to their roles as the facilitators for this engagement.

3) The flipped classrooms with the major orientation of discussion in which the teachers' roles can be reversed or renovated: different digital applications can be implemented and operated as a forum which allows both the teacher and learners to communicate by chatting or talking, to pose questions, to access videos, to create and launch quizzes, and to review their reports.

4) Flexibility: learners and the teacher are free to access the forum or lessons regardless of the barriers of being in a different location, having a different period, and negotiating class decoration. With around a hundred minutes each week, the flipped classroom was developed with a new orientation for more discussion including additional activities after every class meeting.

5) Creation: teachers are responsible for creating the videos.

The findings indicated that the increases in the participants' level of satisfaction were found in the learning environment of the flipped classroom, in comparison to that of the traditional ones. Moreover, the use of technological visual classroom instruments would contribute to the innovation of a renewable interactive learning environment with a high level of engagement. This result would lead to improvements in students' both real-like and real-life learning outcomes (Mason, Shuman, and Cook, 2013) observed. In addition, the benefits of the flipped classroom have also included the potential so that the major thinking skills of students in higher institutions can be enhanced.

Despite the breakthrough of educational technologies, a flipped classroom became useful in reinforcing English language skills for several reasons, it is primarily suggested that during the in-class activities, the instructions with the technological utilities need to be carefully designed so that the enhancement goal of learners' learning experience can be achieved properly.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the application of flipped classrooms in this research context for online international classrooms was successfully implemented with positive satisfaction from learners' perspectives. The level of students' satisfaction was quite high and three top-rated statements can be found, namely, (1) the usefulness of language learners' experience in the learning process, (2) the diversity of effective resourceful topics, and (3) the benefits of having more discussions in the flipped classroom. First, the results indicate that learners in this course with flipped classrooms have experienced the usefulness of their language learning process. They perceived that they can have more involvement in the classroom from the course with a new design with all the features of non-traditional classrooms. Second, since both teachers in the course were from different cultures, the preparation for the course with plenty of effective resources was recognized. Students were exposed to videos, online websites, assessment tools, educational games, platforms, and so on for the sake of fostering language usage and facilitating the real learning process with high awareness and attention. Third, the design of this special course with the flipped classes created more chances for students to join the further discussions and group work for their practices. From that, the teachers can also be able to track their achievements and the effects of their practices at the same time from different geographical locations.

Besides, in this period of the serious pandemic, the proof of the effectiveness of using alternatives for education including a flipped classroom or a form of online cooperation class would give any educator a hint for their adaptation to the current challenges. In this case, our study showed that flipped classrooms can be effectively implemented with not only the traditional settings with videos before class and discussion during class time. This research was conducted with even more designs, for example (1) videos before class, assessment in class, and discussion from that moment to the next meetings, (2) recorded lectures before class, group work, presentation, discussion, or (3) educational games, first-step discussion, group work, individual contribution on some applications, in-depth discussion, presentation for creation or suggestions or group presentations. In fact, a dynamic flipped classroom can be a suitable alternative form of education for many contexts in the future including that of universities in Thailand and Vietnam.



For future recommendations, any interest in this topic should focus more on the measures of the different tools of platforms for flipped classrooms and the roots of these successes. Some experimental studies should be vital to add the values of flipped classrooms to its main designs rather than normal online teaching settings.

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