

Flipped Teaching: Iranian Students' and Teachers' Perceptions

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Abstract: In an effort to examine EFL students' and teachers' perceptions about the role of implementing flipped teaching in the university context, a mixed-method research approach was employed. To this end, 80 male and female Iranian advanced EFL learners majoring in English translation, literature, and English teaching and 204 Iranian EFL instructors were selected. They answered the flipped teaching questionnaires, then ten percent of the participants (8 students and 20 teachers) volunteered for follow-up qualitative data collection procedures (i.e., the interview) to let the researchers produce more profound responses to the related concepts of the study. Then, the data collected from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed. Also, the qualitative analysis of the research was done using the interview transcripts to support the quantitative analysis results of the research. It included content analysis requiring the examination of the participations' interviews transcripts. The findings of the quantitative part revealed that a majority of students held positive perceptions about engagement, effectiveness, attitudes, and positive affect through flipped instruction constructs in the flipped teaching class. University instructors also had an inclination towards implementing flipped teaching on the whole for the constructs named language improvement, attitudes about flipped instruction, better education through flipped instruction, and difficulty of implementing flipped instruction. The qualitative investigation confirmed the previously-stated results to a great extent in that the EFL students and instructors generally preferred employing flipped teaching and they had positive perceptions about the role of this approach.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Constructivism, Flipped Teaching, Students' Perceptions, Teachers' Perceptions.

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Introduction

There has been a continuous shift in how learning is achieved in a classroom. Nevertheless, with the advent of technology and recent educational techniques, more and more applied linguists are choosing the blended approach to attain and develop students' learning experience (Bonk & Graham, 2006; Friesen, 2012). Flipped teaching is one of the new educational innovations, which is considered to offer the potential to change conventional classes and make them more inviting and motivating (Chen Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2017). Flipped teaching or inverted learning inverts the order of teaching by asking learners to do preparatory work before going to the class and therefore to make the class time widely available to be devoted to accomplish learning tasks and developing the concepts at a deeper level. In fact, by flipped teaching, class activities that conventionally did inside the class now do outside the class and vice versa (Adnan, 2017). It may build a different learning environment that is more interactive, energetic, and effective compared with conventional classes (Chen Hsieh, Wu, and Marek, 2017). Studies conducted by Lage, Platt, and Treglia (2000) showed the merits of learning technologies, particularly of the learning technologies via the inverted classroom, also known as the flipped instruction.

Flipped classroom inverts Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) where students perform the lower levels of cognitive work (remembering and understanding) outside the class, and focus on the higher level of cognitive work (application, analysis, evaluating, and creating) in class.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, although flipped instruction keeps its promise as a new model that greatly facilitates teaching and learning, more careful scrutiny of English teaching in Iran, the site of this study, shows that teacher-centered and unidirectional instruction is particularly common. The term flipped classroom instruction is not new to higher education pedagogy; however, adopting this practice seems to be new in many language classes and universities of Iran.

Review of the Related Literature

Flipped classrooms or flipped learning refers to instructional techniques whereby students learn course content via various technology-based materials (e.g., video recordings, narrated presentations, podcasts, and course notes) before attending the class, instead of being practiced within the class. In conventional classrooms, almost everything is received from teachers, educational materials, and homework inside the classroom. Through the flipped

approach, students can increase their knowledge at home via, for instance, going through educational materials and instructional files prepared and delivered by the instructor and follow practice in the class. (Bergmann & Sams 2012; Berrett, 2012; Moravec, Williams, Aguilar-Roca, & O'Dowd, 2010). In other words, Flipped classrooms reverse the traditional learning process where learning is restricted to school principles during school time with instructors being the main resource for knowledge (LaFee, 2013). Flipping as Strayer (2012) stated "moves the lectures outside the classrooms and uses learning activities to move practice with concepts inside the classroom" (p. 171). Although flipped learning is commonly associated with online videos, Bergmann and Sams (2012) emphasize that it is much more than videos/screencasts.

In spite of a number of studies on flipped teaching in other majors, there is only a small number of research studies on the influence of flipped instruction in the arena of second language learning and teaching. For instance, Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016) explored the effect of flipped teaching in teaching grammar on students' performance about learning English. To this end, some educational videos were prepared and made by the researcher before each lesson to provide learning interactions. Forty-three participants were subcategorized into experimental and control groups. The experimental group participants were required to watch the videos by themselves to learn before the class. Moreover, they practiced what they had learned under the instructor's supervision by accomplishing their tasks in pairs or groups. However, the control group was provided with in-class conventional teaching. A posttest analysis revealed that flipped teaching performed a leading role in enhancing English learners' grammar, yet the difference was not significant. In another study, Ahmed (2016) explored the influence of flipped teaching on English writing. The findings of the research indicated that the experimental group was more successful than the control group in the posttest of EFL writing. The findings of his paper also showed that not only did flipped instruction develop students' writing skill but also it improved their perceptions about this skill. Furthermore, flipped teaching increased students' motivation and class engagement.

Similarly, Boyraz and Ocak (2017) came to the conclusion that flipped instruction had the possibility to achieve considerable learning improvements more than conventional approaches. Most of the participants of that study believed flipped instruction helped them learn better (73.77% vs. 17.39%). They mentioned flipped instruction does not require more out of classroom time than conventional approaches do. In fact, flipped teaching increases students' motivation to be ready for the lesson and makes their learning happen positively.

Moreover, students found flipped teaching highly motivating and highly beneficial to be able to rewind educational videos when they did not understand. They also believed that completing exercises with teacher help was easier. Participants also expressed that the selection of videos is crucial and they may have problems if videos are not carefully chosen. Students in that research mentioned that flipped instruction enables them to be independent learners and it is more suitable for their personal characters.

Besides, there are some studies concentrating on students' perceptions about flipped teaching. Mehring's (2015) exploration with Japanese university students studying in an EFL flipped classroom revealed improved active learning, cooperation, and involvement among students. Other research in the language context was conducted with 48 students by Chen Hsieh, Wu, and Marek (2017) concluded that because of increased motivation along with enhanced knowledge on topics, flipped teaching was an appropriate instructional approach for English teaching.

Recent interest in the implementation of flipped teaching has resulted in an increasing number of studies in various fields of studies, but there are still few researches on the application of this model for language learning and teaching (Mehring, 2016). Therefore, while the use of the flipped classroom is not new, there has recently been more widespread use of this approach possibly due to an increase in accessibility to technology both at university and at home. This paper focuses on the use of the flipped classroom by attempting to discover students' and teachers' perceptions of the use of this method.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to add more qualitative and quantitative value to the existing literature around the flipped classroom by performing data analysis in a higher education setting. In fact, this study made an attempt to examine students' and teachers' perceptions of using flipped teaching rather than more conventional methods of instruction. Therefore, this paper attempted to examine the following research questions:

RQ1: How do Iranian advanced university EFL learners perceive flipped instruction?

RQ2: How do Iranian university instructors perceive flipped instruction?

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were 80 Iranian advanced EFL learners majoring in English translation, literature, and English teaching at two branches of Islamic Azad University; they were both male and female who aged from 19 to 37. The participants were selected by means

of a real IELTS test taken from the official IELTS books, IELTS Cambridge series published by Cambridge University Press. Participants' selection criteria chosen by the researchers were as follows: The mean score of the test was calculated and those who obtained a score above one standard deviation were given the label "advanced". Moreover, 204 Iranian EFL university instructors, 136 females and 68 males, within the range of 27 to 60 were selected through convenience sampling. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), convenience sampling is a form of nonrandom sampling method which is defined as "the selection of individuals who happen to be available for study" (p. 122). It is the most widespread type of sampling in EFL studies (Dornyei, 2007). The instructors were picked out from two branches of Islamic Azad University as well as University of Tehran, and University of Allameh all located in Tehran. All of them were experienced instructors with minimum five years of teaching English language background. Because of the explanations preceding the items in the questionnaire for the teachers, EFL university instructors were supposed to be familiar with flipped classroom approach. However, these explanations for the teachers do not seem to have crystallized this innovative trend in language pedagogy. Therefore, six 4-hour workshops were set up and almost all principles and theories behind flipped teaching were explained and the instructors learned how to develop a plan to flip their courses. They also learned how to make materials available outside the classroom and brainstorm activities during the class time.

Instrumentation

Questionnaires

Reviewing the previous instruments and models in the literature review has revealed that there is a lack of reliable and valid questionnaires in the context of this study to measure students' and teachers' perceptions about flipped instruction. Because of this instrumental lacuna in the field, this research intended to utilize a newly-developed questionnaire by Vaezi (2019) to serve the purposes of this study. Two kinds of questionnaires for students and instructors were administered by the researchers. The questionnaires have been already validated in Vaezi study. Exploratory Factor Analyses and Confirmatory Factor Analyses were performed on the two questionnaires in that study to see if the questionnaires work as intended. Nevertheless, the researchers made a decision to pilot the questionnaires again in this study. To do so, the questionnaires were given to 200 Iranian advanced language learners in Islamic Azad University who were at the same level of English proficiency as the

participants of the current study and 200 university English teachers. The results of the pilot study were analyzed to check the reliability of the questionnaires via Chronbach's alpha. The students' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire enjoyed an acceptable reliability, ($r=.73$) and ($r=.74$), respectively. In order to reinsure the face validity, the items on the questionnaires were given to two other experienced university instructors to check for the lack of ambiguity.

The students' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire consist of 13 and 12 items, respectively, on a 5-point Likert scale format (see Appendix A and B). After the questionnaires were piloted, 80 Iranian advanced EFL students and 204 teachers were asked to express their perceptions about flipped classroom approach. The administration of the questionnaire did not take more than 15 minutes on the part of the respondents. Moreover, being written in learners' mother tongue, Persian language, their instructions as well as their items were easily and clearly understood by the respondents. Mackey and Gass (2012) argue that the best questionnaire is one that is translated and presented in the respondents' own mother tongue because the data that is collected through this questionnaire is more precise and qualified. Thus, the practicality of the questionnaires was not questioned.

Interviews

In order to collect more input from the participants of the study about their perceptions of flipped teaching, semi-structured interviews were prepared to examine EFL learners and teachers' perceptions. The interview questions were developed by the researchers from the relevant literature and examined by two other experts in the field of language teaching and learning to check if they were suitable for the purpose of this study. These semi-structured interviews, consisting of 8 questions for the students and 11 questions for the teachers, were conducted following the questionnaires administration with ten percent of the participants (see Appendix C and D). Precisely, one of the researchers conducted the interviews with 28 participants (8 students and 20 teachers). All oral interviews were audio-recorded for further analysis. Before the interview, the content of the items was given to the participants and they were provided with the needed information in the case of misunderstanding about the special terms, their meaning and probable definitions. Participants were given some helpful examples in a mutual discussion with the interviewers. Needless to say, interviews improved the quality of conclusions about the questions under the study and supported the findings derived from the questionnaires.

Data Collection Procedure

At first, eighty Iranian advanced EFL students received introductory demonstrations, explanations, and class instruction about flipped classroom approach and its instructional materials for the first time. As for the materials, preplanned materials were the focus of this study for periods of approximately 60 minutes, once a week during a 10-week semester in the English classes designed for the students of English teaching, literature, and English translation at Islamic Azad University. These materials for the flipped instruction were produced by the researchers in the form of screencasts, videos, or PowerPoint lectures and revised by two other university instructors. Then, the researchers clarified how the program will proceed and explained to the language learners the reasons for following this innovative method of instruction, emphasizing that it is essential that students consider the assigned videos or PPTs as their homework to come to class ready with the information needed in order to free more practice class time. Expectations from the participants were explained thoroughly, but it seemed that proper class implementation required some time. It might be due to participants' initial resistance to the change in the instructional delivery method. In other words, students were given screencasts, videos, or PowerPoint files to study before the next class every week. Lesson exercises and class activities were designed to assess the participants' learning. Class activities were task-based and scaffolded depending on participants' learning abilities. Moreover, 204 university instructors volunteered to take part in six 4-hour workshops in which almost all principles and theories behind flipped teaching were explained and the teachers learned how to develop a plan to flip their courses. They also learned how to make materials available outside the classroom and brainstorm activities during the class time. Afterwards, the students and the university instructors were asked to complete their own questionnaires to examine their perceptions about flipped teaching.

The questionnaires were exploited to investigate advanced university students and university EFL instructors' perceived perceptions about flipped teaching. Additionally, 8 students and 20 teachers, who had previously expressed their consent, were chosen to be interviewed. The length of interviews was approximately 20 minutes. At first, short introduction was given to the interviewees about the purpose of the interview. In the interview, Interviewees' personal views and perceptions about flipped classroom approach were asked. Interviews were conducted to enrich the conclusion about the results of the study. It should be noted that the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and transcribed for the subsequent qualitative analysis procedures.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the collected data, the raw data were fed into the computer and then all the statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software (version 25). The researchers used descriptive statistics of each question to determine the students' and teachers' general perceptions about flipped classroom approach. Analyzing the respondents' answers (in five-point Likert scale pattern) to the items of the questionnaire, the researchers utilized frequencies and percentages of each category separately and got the total values for either of them to answer the research questions.

The qualitative analysis of the research was done using the interview transcripts to support the qualitative analysis results of the research. It included content analysis requiring the examination of the participations' interviews transcripts. In fact, this stage of data analysis was planned to reduce the data into 'manageable chunks' in order to allow interpretation of the data as the researchers formulated meaning and insights from the words of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Results

The First Research Question

To investigate the first research question, 80 advanced university EFL learners were selected. They responded to the newly-designed questionnaire by Vaezi (2019) and descriptive data based on these responses are presented in Table 1 in terms of the agreement or disagreement of the students with each statement in the questionnaire. The questionnaire constructs include 'engagement', 'effectiveness', 'attitudes', and 'positive affect through flipped instruction', respectively.

As regards the opportunities flipped instruction can provide for more engagement with other L2 learners, the results of the analyses showed that more than half of the students agreed or strongly agreed with this capacity for flipped instruction. On the other hand, the majority of the learners were in favor of the benefit of flipped instruction for improving their language skills. Of course, it should also be pointed out that the questions belonging to the second construct were largely about the supporting role of technology alongside flipped instruction. Thus, the students' responses reflect this fact as well. Similarly, the students generally had a positive attitude toward flipped instruction as they believed they were unlikely to learn more through conventional teaching. Yet, the only exception was the disagreement of a majority of them with the power of flipped approach for classroom

problem solving. Lastly, more than half of the students stated that flipped instruction made them feel more relaxed in the classroom and more confident when speaking in particular and learning in general. To sum up, the results revealed that the majority of participants held positive perceptions about applying flipped classroom approach in university EFL classes.

Table 1. *Frequencies and Percentages Relating to Students' Responses*

Choices	Factors							
Factor I: Engagement with Other Learners through Flipped Instruction								
	Item 2: Quality of contact		Item 5: FI presenting more time for contact		Item 10: More collaboration in FI classes		Item 12: More time to connect in FI classes	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	2.5%	3	3.8%	4	5.0%	3	3.8%
Disagree	14	17.5%	17	21.3%	11	13.8%	13	16.3%
Neutral	25	31.3%	21	26.3%	24	30.0%	17	21.3%
Agree	28	35.0%	28	35.0%	32	40.0%	35	43.8%
Strongly agree	11	13.8%	11	13.8%	9	11.3%	12	15.0%
Total	80	100.0%	80	100.0%	80	100.0%	80	100.0%
Factor II: Enhancing language skills through Flipped Instruction								
	Item 1: Technology enhances language skills		Item 9: FI and Technology help with language skills		Item 11: Technology helps with language skills			
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1.3%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disagree	3	3.8%	8	10.0%	3	3.8%	3	3.8%
Neutral	4	5.0%	7	8.8%	9	11.3%	9	11.3%
Agree	48	60.0%	49	61.3%	54	67.5%	54	67.5%
Strongly agree	24	30.0%	16	20.0%	14	17.5%	14	17.5%
Total	80	100.0%	80	100.0%	80	100.0%	80	100.0%
Factor III: Attitudes toward Flipped Instruction								
	Item 3: FI helps classroom problem solving		Item 7: I Learn more through CI		Item 13: I Prefer accomplishing tasks in class and getting immediate feedback			
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Strongly disagree	13	16.3%	17	21.3%	15.0	15.0%	15.0	15.0%
Disagree	35	43.8%	35	43.8%	33.8	33.8%	33.8	33.8%
Neutral	13	16.3%	8	10.0%	18.8	18.8%	18.8	18.8%
Agree	17	21.3%	17	21.3%	26.3	26.3%	26.3	26.3%
Strongly agree	2	2.5%	3	3.8%	6.3	6.3%	6.3	6.3%
Total	80	100.0%	80	100.0%	80	100.0%	80	100.0%

Factor IV: Positive Affect through Flipped Instruction						
	Item 4 Feeling more relaxed while speaking in FI class		Item 6: Feeling more confident while speaking in FI class		Item 8: Feeling more confident while learning through FI	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	2.5%	2	2.5%	3	3.8%
Disagree	10	12.5%	12	15.0%	10	12.5%
Neutral	24	30.0%	20	25.0%	27	33.8%
Agree	31	38.8%	33	41.3%	28	35.0%
Strongly agree	13	16.3%	13	16.3%	12	15.0%
Total	80	100.0%	80	100.0%	80	100.0%

Note: FI = Flipped Instruction; CI = Conventional Instruction

Moreover, the qualitative findings yielded strong and conclusive evidence for the highly rated impact of flip teaching. Many learners mentioned different satisfying aspects of their flipped learning experience in the questionnaire, with the structured design of the learning materials being the most obvious reason why they placed a high value on this educational approach. As a language learner reported in the interview, *“My favorite part of this approach was being able to go through the materials at my own pace, and the way that the educational materials were organized was easy to follow.”* Another satisfying feature reported by most of students was the increased involvement with the teacher and other students. A number of students stated in the interviews that it was less terrifying to ask the instructor or their classmates their own questions in the feedback sessions of flipped classrooms, in contrast with conventional whole-class instruction. As a language learner stated, *“I like that we go through the preplanned and self-study educational materials at home before the class, so when we attend the class, we can practice what we have learned with our classmates and use English for communicative purposes.”* Another student talked about the following issues, *“I favor flipped teaching because it is extremely helpful and advantageous. By the use of this model, I have a broad range of choosing the educational materials for language learning. I can select a large number of PowerPoint files, screencasts, videos, clips, activities, and everything that will be useful for enhancing language proficiency”.*

When some other learners were asked about the merits of flipped classroom instruction in the follow-up interview, learners’ responses included answers such as *“by knowing the new lessons, and tips in advance, we can review the materials anytime we want”* similarly another learner’s response clearly demonstrated an enhanced self-confidence *“studying by*

myself without getting embarrassed that I didn't easily understand something in class.” More examples of what other students mentioned are found below, and all of them are reflections of more self-confidence and active engagement, stronger motivation, and increased autonomy in class because of flipped approach:

Student 1: *“I can ask my teacher to give me more feedback in class.”*

Student 2: *“It decreases the time spent on clarifying so we have more time to be in contact with the teacher and ask him our questions.”*

Student 3: *“We have more time to practice in class.”*

Student 4: *“I can review the educational materials if I don't understand.”*

To sum up, participants commented that flipped teaching had facilitated communication with the instructor, resulting in support and help being easily available. As a matter of fact, students regard their instructor as an expert who communicates eagerly with students and is more available for assistance. Furthermore, the students in the flipped classroom demonstrated great interest in their learning in the class than the language learner in the traditional class. In fact, students in the flipped classroom revealed that the materials were presented in an interesting way and the class was well-organized. Participants in the flipped classroom did not complain or say that they had to do more work outside the class by studying the prepared materials at home. In other words, with the time spent working on homework in class, they probably spent almost equal time working on materials outside of class as language learners in the conventional courses. In short, the participants reflected a preference for flipped teaching over conventional classroom teaching.

The Second Research Question

To investigate the second research question, a sample of 204 university instructors were selected to fill out the newly-designed, reliable, and validated questionnaire by Vaezi (2019) to inform the researchers about their perceptions regarding flipped instruction (see Table 2). Precisely, this questionnaire was employed to evaluate the university instructors' acceptance of the flipped teaching used in this study with constructs named 'language improvement', 'attitudes to flipped instruction', 'better education through flipped instruction', and 'difficulty of implementing flipped instruction'.

The results indicated that, an overwhelming majority of these instructors agreed or strongly agreed that this approach has the capacity to improve students' knowledge of English. They were also in favor of the continued use of flipped teaching as an instructional

tool. However, less than half of them felt that using this approach in their classes gave them feelings of composure and confidence. Regarding the instructors' perceptions about the capability of flipped teaching to improve practice, once again a majority supported the view that this approach can open up many possibilities for language teachers. These included the ability to personalize instruction, manage time more efficiently, and connect more to the L2 learners. Finally, half of the participants believed that a major hurdle in the way of flipped teaching is access to technology which is a very important finding. On the other hand, although more than half of the teachers disagreed that students may evaluate flipped instruction as a method for teachers to deny their responsibilities, less than half believed such a thing may occur. Similarly, a majority of teachers did not believe that flipped teaching may be used by language teachers as a method for denying their responsibilities. In conclusion, the findings indicated that the EFL university instructors have an inclination towards implementing flipped teaching on the whole in EFL classes.

Table 2. *Frequencies and Percentages Relating to Teachers' Responses*

Choices	Factors					
Factor I: language Improvement						
	Item 2: FI improves language skills		Item 5: Technology improves language skills		Item 9: Continuing to use FI for teaching language skills	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disagree	8	3.9%	8	3.9%	12	5.9%
Neutral	24	11.8%	10	4.9%	20	9.8%
Agree	134	65.7%	126	61.8%	154	75.5%
Strongly agree	38	18.6%	60	29.4%	18	8.8%
Total	204	100.0%	204	100.0%	204	100.0%
Factor II: Attitudes to Flipped Instruction						
	Item 11: Feeling more relaxed in an FI class		Item 12: Feeling more confident in an FI class			
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent		
Strongly disagree	2	1.0%	-	-		
Disagree	32	15.7%	28	13.7%		
Neutral	76	37.3%	84	41.2%		
Agree	80	39.2%	72	35.3%		
Strongly agree	14	6.9%	20	9.8%		
Total	204	100.0%	204	100.0%		

Factor III: Better Education through Flipped Instruction								
	Item 1: Videos can enhance learning		Item 4: FI enables the teacher to personalize instruction		Item 6: FI class allows efficient management of time		Item 10: More connection with students in FI class	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	1.0%	4	2.0%	4	2.0%	2	1.0%
Disagree	6	2.9%	14	6.9%	24	11.8%	19	9.3%
Neutral	34	16.7%	34	16.7%	48	23.5%	46	22.5%
Agree	114	55.9%	114	55.9%	106	52.0%	121	59.3%
Strongly agree	48	23.5%	38	18.6%	22	10.8%	16	7.8%
Total	204	100.0%	204	100.0%	204	100.0%	204	100.0%

Factor IV: Difficulty of Implementing Flipped Instruction						
	Item 3: FI is difficult because of issues of access to technology		Item 7: Students may think teachers use FI to shirk their duties		Item 8: Teachers may use FI to shirk their duties	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	1.0%	6	2.9%	36	17.6%
Disagree	48	23.5%	56	27.5%	84	41.2%
Neutral	44	21.6%	54	26.5%	48	23.5%
Agree	90	44.1%	66	32.4%	34	16.7%
Strongly agree	20	9.8%	22	10.8%	2	1.0%
Total	204	100.0%	204	100.0%	204	100.0%

Note: FI = Flipped Instruction

The objective of the qualitative part of this research question was to yield and discover more supportive evidence for the attitudes of flipped teaching from university instructors. In order for the instructors' thoughts to be reasonably explained thoroughly with regard to their perception about flipped classroom, the researchers used their exact words so that no unintended partiality from the researchers were reported in the findings of the educators' thoughts. A number of comments from some instructors are as follows:

One teacher stated, *“Most of students’ dissatisfaction was with working with technology and that is my sense of frustration as well. Having depended on home computers can be inadequate. Having school-provided technology would make it less difficult to deal with in many ways. Firstly, students would have a consistent and dependable piece of technology to go through the preplanned materials. Secondly, students could maybe utilize technology to go through the educational materials even when not at home. Thirdly, students might also allow access to these materials more easily while at school or university.”*

Another teacher commented, *“This approach would be helpful in many ways. Students could easily do the homework during their study instead of waiting until they arrive home. They could also go through the materials again during class time if needed for questions or review during class. The students who did not study the materials at home found that it was difficult to accomplish the tasks that were assigned in the class. Therefore, this made their group members feel annoyed or angry since they could not take part in the conversation as well.”*

Another instructor mentioned, *“I am going to continue making videos for my other and future classes. I reckon flipped teaching helps students in several ways. One, we are always dealing with absent students. Additionally, I suppose educational videos and PowerPoint slides could be considered as a good review. Background knowledge is triggered and they are prepared for the following day! I am also going to post educational files made by other instructors so students can study those and see the same topic taught from someone else’s point of view.”*

The findings of the qualitative part showed that flipped teaching makes changes to the nature of EFL instructors’ role in language classes. The instructors’ role in a flipped classroom is mostly of a facilitator and mentor. The instructor offers assistance when it is essential and appropriate. Essentially, flipped teaching holds out a promise for becoming a powerful educational model that enhances students’ engagement. By using this model, instructors can change the pace of instruction, reinforce and review learning, increase motivation, and give immediate and useful feedback.

Moreover, the results indicated that university instructors have positive perceptions of this approach for use in their own classroom. A number of advantages noted include enhanced student accountability for the content, enhanced student-teacher interaction, teacher advice during learning, and easy makeup for teacher or student absences. Some drawbacks mentioned by the instructors include responsibility for the students studying the premade materials, the need for immediate feedback, and the time it takes to prepare for this approach at the beginning. Nevertheless, these instructors agreed that using flipped teaching enhances student involvement in their classroom. Most interviewees stated teacher readiness as a key factor to the use of innovative teaching methods and/or technology integration in the classroom. Inan and Lowther (2009) also mentioned that instructors’ readiness influenced technology integration more than any other factor.

Discussion

The most significant results of this study could be that university students and instructors were satisfied with flipped classroom instruction. The main findings suggested by this study were the advantageous application of flipped teaching to language learning at university. The students rated their 'engagement', 'effectiveness', 'attitudes', and 'affect through flipped instruction' positively, hence validating the use of flipped teaching for language learning, especially for advanced university students capable of interaction in English, who were the participants of this study. Similarly, the instructors rated the 'language improvement', 'attitudes', and 'better education through flipped instruction' highly. This is in line with other research that have also indicated student acceptance of flipped instruction (Lucke, 2014; Mortensen & Nicholson, 2014) and confirms the merits of the teacher who is helpful as a guide by the side, rather than a lecturer, allowing students to develop confidence and learn actively (Sarawagi, 2014).

This paper has also presented generally important and positive findings on the students' engagement, satisfaction, and performance. Firstly, the results of this paper are in line with some other studies carried out in other fields of study about active learner participation and engagement (e.g., Guertin, Zappe, & Kim, 2007; Moravec et al., 2010), in that flipped instruction allows the students to preview and review the content at their own pace and based on their needs, such as understanding new concepts, reading extra resources, and searching words. Secondly, the results of McGivney-Burelle and Xue (2013) and Frydenberg (2013) show ample and conclusive evidence that the majority of students are well satisfied with learning in a flipped classroom contrary to a conventional one, and similar findings were confirmed in this article. Thirdly, the current work supports the results produced in Davies, Dean, and Ball (2013) that the flipped classroom is closely associated with better academic performance, whereas conventional classrooms are relatively less effective. Generally, it is obvious that although flipped teaching has been primarily applied in other disciplines and majors apart from English teaching and learning, its possibility across language learning and teaching should not be underestimated.

Finally, it was discovered that the majority of students felt fully independent and highly motivated owing to flipped teaching. Learner autonomy is clearly shown in learners via better confidence in their abilities and achievement. It was demonstrated not only through the questionnaire but also through the follow-up interview, and is discovered to be in agreement with Smith (2008) who sees students in the center of their learning. Previous research

(Chang, 2005; Kemmer, 2011; Liu, 2013) indicated that today students greatly admire technology and blended learning, enhanced autonomy, motivation, and student-centeredness in general. Gannod, Burge, and Helmick (2008) also reported particularly favorable impressions of students about flipped approach in an economics class.

Another key point of flipped teaching mentioned by the instructors in this study is the immediate feedback the students receive on their tasks as they are completing them in class under the regular supervision of an instructor (Gee, 2003). Whereas immediate feedback is nearly impossible with conventional teaching approaches, inclusion of technology, in this case by using flipped teaching, makes it a possibility (Gee, 2003). Students had also more time to get feedback whether in person or in group and to interact with their teacher. In support of the importance of instructors' perceptions about the use of technology, Yuksel and Kavanoz (2011) also led their study on 200 teachers and found that 66.5% had highly positive and 30.5% had slightly positive opinions and impressions towards technology. In another study by Mcalister, Dunn, and Quinn (2005), teachers showed positive attitudes towards using technology, despite the fact that they did not have enough experience about technology utilization.

Implications

Although the findings of this study can advance existing research, akin to any study, this paper suffered from some limitations. First, since the participants of this study were EFL learners and practicing instructors only from Tehran province in Iran, the collected data may not be truly representative of the whole population of English instructors and students in this country. Second, convenient sampling was utilized to gather data in this study as the sampling method. Administration of questionnaires and carrying out the interviews were done in the context in which the participants were volunteers. Due to the practicality issue, the researcher had to interview those participants who were present in the immediate context and this could have affected the results of the study. As such, the findings of this paper ought to be considered as tentative and open to revision.

This kind of research has implications for curriculum-related activities and learning technologies, in terms of helping us understand how instructors capitalize on the technology available in supporting students to construct links between their language competence and performance. With the aim of decreasing the disparity between technology and existing curricula, teachers who create instructive programming and language materials are suggested

to make connections among coursebooks and curricula in accordance with flipped teaching. Instructors are also recommended to create level-differentiated flipped teaching materials to react to the learners' necessities, favorites, backgrounds, and learning styles. Materials and syllabi should be updated routinely to reflect feedback from instructors and learners.

Besides, teachers' positive perceptions of flipped teaching are helpful for enhancing their practical teaching abilities, self-confidence, and self-esteem. As a result, it is crucial for instructors to try to develop learning objectives for the students' proficiency level. Although many teachers believe that instructors are the sole authority in the class, it is recommended to change their attitudes in this regard which will make the process of learning and teaching more tangible and quite understandable for both learners and teachers. Indeed, the findings of this research would help teachers, who look for an effective way to build a collaborative environment for their students. More significantly, instructors would get to know how to implement flipped teaching in their instruction to meet the learners' need appropriately, but it should be mentioned that in order to make the students ready to use flipped teaching, full training is needed so that they will realize how to fully implement this approach. The results of this research efforts are also hopeful and may be of full benefit to instructors who prefer to use technology in their classrooms. Modern educators cannot let technological revolution pass by without using it to serve their language teaching objectives. Instructors are recommended to consider what flipped teaching offers for their classrooms, and should, consequently, look for the necessary training to use it effectively.

The results of the present study can also be of use in educational centers. The suggested points for teachers in language centers are that they change the way they instruct the students and move towards a more learner-oriented method or approach. Besides, the findings of present study would be of great benefit for the Ministry of Education, the higher-order educational decision-makers as well as the students and teachers themselves to perceive the foreign language learning students' and teachers' perceptions about flipped teaching.

Conclusions

The participants of this study believe that flipped instruction can potentially be a beneficial approach. The significant advantages of flipped classroom instruction are great chances of communication, further increases in language practice, improvement of language skills, and autonomous learning. The participants also discern a lack of knowledge about flipped approach on the part of most of the teachers, and the need for professional development. The

findings also showed that a majority of instructors indicated their general preference towards using flipped teaching. Then, the researchers realized that university teachers often have the preference to use flipped approach and PowerPoint files to teach students the required lessons at home.

By examining the results, the researchers draw a conclusion that students and university instructors are into various technology facets implemented in language learning. Nevertheless, owing to a number of limitations in Iranian universities such as lack of technological education, some teachers are not successful in using flipped teaching properly. In accordance with the qualitative results, flipped instruction can be advantageous in foreign language learning from different viewpoints. Firstly, students' time and energy will be saved. Students can ask their instructors' help any time they are in need. Secondly, flipped teaching can help instructors in making a more individualized approach to fulfil the wide range of students' needs in classrooms. Teachers might have the authority to review student learning, change the pace of instruction, increase motivation, teach and reinforce different skills and strategies, and give students immediate and relevant feedback. Thirdly, this model let learners actively participate in their own learning process. Adopting this educational approach has clearly redefined the role of the teacher and has required teacher training in the area of flipped teaching. While students get more accountable for their learning process, instructors play the role of an advisor by helping students increase the use of technology in the process of language learning. Furthermore, flipped teaching engaged students in the learning tasks, made them more active and competent in using language skills for communicative interaction, class discussion, and group presentations.

In fact, flipped teaching is in agreement with innovative ideas of student-centered active learning (Fresen, 2007) and results in satisfactory outcomes. Student responsibility is essential and teachers must find ways of recognizing and intervening with the students who were not able to perform their flipped learning outside the class.

This paper also concludes that the role of teachers has been changed since there is no need for the teachers to be the bearer of all information. Now, content is easily available and readily accessible thanks to technology. Technology developments also have changed the role of teachers by letting them challenge learners in various ways, supplying them with experience and skills, teaching them to be lifelong learners rather than just teaching them the content in their subject area. The utilization of this approach makes that role change quite easy.

In conclusion, this study can be set as a benchmark to shift from the conventional classroom to the flipped classroom. This approach could be applied in other lessons or followed by other instructors in the world. Jamaludin and Osman (2014) mentioned that this innovative learning environment helped instructors to achieve their outcomes and make learning and teaching more student-centered, engaging, and active. Nevertheless, conducting future research on flipped teaching seems necessary. For example, a study about the quality of applying flipped teaching among part-time students can be carried out to investigate how efficiently they learn by flipping the class in their tight schedules.

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نگرش زبان آموزان در مورد رویکرد آموزش معکوس: Appendix A

نام و نام خانوادگی: سن: جنسیت:
 محل تحصیل: آموزشگاه/دانشگاه (لطفا نام محل تحصیل را ذکر فرمائید)
 زبان آموزان گرامی،

این پرسشنامه با هدف بررسی نگرش شما زبان آموزان محترم در مورد فرآیند آموزش معکوس طراحی شده است. بدین منظور، تکمیل دقیق این پرسشنامه برای دستیابی به اطلاعات واقعی که برای به دست آوردن نتایج دقیق ضروری است، کمک خواهد کرد. اطلاعات ثبت شده در این پرسشنامه محرمانه بوده و فقط برای اهداف پژوهشی به کار خواهد رفت. پیشاپیش از همکاری شما در تکمیل با دقت این پرسشنامه سپاسگزاریم.

ردیف	کاملا مخالفم	کاملا موافقم	ایده‌ای ندارم	مخالفم	موافقم	کاملا موافقم
۱.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	استفاده از فایل‌های صوتی تصویری، مطالب و نرم‌افزارهای آموزشی من را تقویت می‌کند.
۲.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	رویکرد آموزش معکوس کیفیت مهارت‌های ارتباطی من را ارتقا می‌دهد.
۳.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	با استفاده از رویکرد آموزش معکوس در خارج از کلاس درس می‌آموزم و در داخل کلاس اشکالاتم را برطرف می‌کنم.
۴.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	در کلاس آموزش معکوس احساس آرامش بیشتری در حین صحبت کردن به زبان انگلیسی دارم.
۵.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	در مقایسه با کلاس‌های دیگر رویکرد آموزش معکوس فرصت بیشتری برای ارتباط و تشریح مساعی با دیگر زبان آموزان در اختیار من قرار می‌دهد.
۶.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	در کلاس معکوس اعتماد به نفس بیشتری برای صحبت کردن به زبان انگلیسی دارم.
۷.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	با استفاده از آموزش مستقیم و توضیح معلم در کلاس درس بیشتر می‌آموزم.
۸.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	با استفاده از رویکرد آموزش معکوس اعتماد به نفس بیشتری در حین یادگیری دارم.
۹.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	رویکرد آموزش معکوس، فایل‌های صوتی، فیلم‌ها، مطالب و نرم‌افزارهای آموزشی به تقویت زبان انگلیسی من کمک می‌کند.
۱۰.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	در کلاس معکوس بیش از پیش در فرآیند یادگیری مشارکت داده می‌شوم.
۱۱.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	استفاده از فایل‌های صوتی، فیلم‌ها، مطالب و نرم‌افزارهای آموزشی از پیش تهیه شده به تقویت زبان انگلیسی من کمک می‌کند.
۱۲.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	کلاس آموزش معکوس فرصت بیشتری برای ارتباط با دیگر زبان آموزان را به من می‌دهد.
۱۳.	۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	ترجیح می‌دهم فعالیت‌های یادگیری را در کلاس انجام داده و بازخورد آن را به سرعت از معلم دریافت کنم.

نگرش معلمان در مورد رویکرد آموزش معکوس

نام و نام خانوادگی: سن: جنسیت:

محل تدریس: آموزشگاه/دانشگاه (لطفا نام محل تدریس را ذکر فرمائید)

میزان سابقه تدریس: (به سال)

معلمین گرامی،

پرسشنامه حاضر به بررسی نگرش شما در مورد رویکرد آموزش معکوس (Flipped Classroom Instruction) می‌پردازد. کلاس آموزش معکوس رویکردی آموزشی است که در آن شیوه متداول تدریس وارونه می‌شود و به جای اینکه تکالیف در خانه و تدریس در کلاس درس انجام شود، زبان آموزان درس را در خانه از طریق فایل‌های صوتی، فیلم‌ها، مطالب و پاورپوینت‌های آموزشی می‌آموزند. معلم این مواد آموزشی را بر اساس مطالب درسی تنظیم، از پیش آماده کرده و در اختیار زبان آموزان قرار می‌دهد و در کلاس درس تنها به انجام تمرین‌ها، مباحثه و پرسش و پاسخ می‌پردازد. از این رو، فایل‌های صوتی، فیلم‌ها، مطالب و نرم افزارهای آموزشی از پیش تهیه شده عنصر اصلی این رویکرد را تشکیل می‌دهند.

کاملا مخالفم	مخالفم	ایده‌ای ندارم	موافقم	کاملا موافقم	ردیف
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۱. ویدئوهای آموزشی موجود در رسانه‌های اجتماعی مانند یوتیوب و آپارات می‌توانند یادگیری را تسهیل نمایند.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۲. رویکرد آموزش معکوس زبان انگلیسی عمومی زبان آموزان را تقویت می‌کند.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۳. به دلیل نیاز زبان آموزان به دسترسی به ابزارهای تکنولوژی جانبی همانند لپ‌تاپ، تبلت و ... استفاده از این روش دشوار است.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۴. رویکرد آموزش معکوس زمان بیشتری را در اختیار معلم قرار می‌دهد تا بتواند آموزش را برای هر زبان آموز شخصی سازی کند.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۵. استفاده از فایل‌های صوتی، فیلم‌ها، مطالب و نرم افزارهای آموزشی از پیش تهیه شده به تقویت زبان انگلیسی عمومی زبان آموزان کمک می‌کند.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۶. در کلاس آموزش معکوس زمان را به صورت بهینه مدیریت می‌کنم.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۷. زبان آموزان ممکن است احساس کنند معلم برای شانه خالی کردن از مسئولیت خود از رویکرد آموزش معکوس استفاده می‌کند.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۸. معلم ممکن است برای شانه خالی کردن از مسئولیت خود از رویکرد آموزش معکوس استفاده کند.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۹. در فرصت‌های بعدی نیز از رویکرد آموزش معکوس برای تدریس زبان انگلیسی استفاده می‌کنم.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۱۰. در کلاس آموزش معکوس با زبان آموزان بیشتر ارتباط برقرار می‌کنم.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۱۱. در کلاس آموزش معکوس احساس آرامش بیشتری دارم.
۱	۲	۳	۴	۵	۱۲. در کلاس آموزش معکوس اعتماد به نفس بیشتری دارم.

Appendix C: Flipped Classroom Instruction Interview Questions for Students

Background Information

Age: Gender: Academic Degree ...

1. Do you prefer conventional learning or flipped learning? Why?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of flipped classroom approach? Please elaborate on them?
3. Does flipped classroom improve your general English? How?
4. How do you describe yourself as a student in a flipped classroom?
5. How do you compare your flipped classroom with your other classrooms? How similar/different are they?
6. How does this classroom influence your opinion of learning?
7. Is technology helpful in this class? How?
8. Do you think Flipped Classroom Approach is applicable in the context of Iran? Why/Why not?
9. Please add any other comments about flipped classroom approach.

Appendix D: Flipped Classroom Instruction Interview Questions for Teachers

Background Information

Age: Gender: Academic Degree

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of flipped classroom approach? Please discuss them?
2. Do you prefer teaching in a conventional classroom or a flipped classroom? Why?
3. How do you describe yourself as a teacher in a flipped classroom?
4. How do you compare flipped classroom with other classrooms? How similar/different are they?
5. How can this classroom influence your opinion of teaching?
6. Is technology helpful in this class? How?
7. What levels can be taught better by the use of this approach?
8. Which language skills and sub-skills can be taught by the use of this approach?
9. What difficulties and barriers will you face in case you apply this approach?
10. Do you think flipped classroom approach is applicable in the context of Iran? Why/Why not?
11. Please add your own comments about flipped classroom approach.

