



## Flipped Classroom Technique: Engagement and Value

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the effectiveness of the flipped classroom technique in engaging learners and creating value, as perceived by EFL learners involved in a flipped classroom structure. It also investigates the effect of gender on engagement with and value of flipped activities. The study population consists of 40 EFL learners who attended a flipped learning course in the academic year of 2019-2020. The data were gathered through a questionnaire on a four-point Likert scale. The quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using the parametric Levine's test and t-test independent sample formula. The results were analyzed by using the SPSS Statistics software package. The results of the t-test formula indicated there were significant differences between male and female perception in terms of their engagement with and value of flipped classroom activities. The females reported greater engagement and a stronger desire to engage, and they valued the flipped techniques more than the male learners. In light of the findings, the study recommends enhancing male learners' involvement in knowledge acquisition outside the classroom to promote more interest in and value of flipped instruction in the English language classroom.

**Keywords:** *flipped classroom; learning engagement; value of flipped classroom activities; technology-enhanced language learning.*



### 1. Introduction

The technological revolution in the field of education conducted in new pedagogical approaches, one of which was the flipped classroom. The term *flipped learning* was used by Kostka and Marshall (2018, p. 224) to refer to an educational approach in which content that is traditionally presented in class is learned at home, and work that is traditionally completed as homework is done in class. This method emphasizes the importance of blended learning, which differs from the traditional model of learning in that most of the instruction occurs outside of the classroom, usually online (Reidsema et al., 2017). This means that active learning, which traditionally takes place outside of school hours in the form of homework, takes place in the classroom. Hence, the approach to teaching and learning is flipped. This study concerns the speaking skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. EFL is a compulsory course for students in their first year at the community college. According to several studies, EFL students demonstrate low proficiency overall in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Al-Hamlan & Baniabdelrahman, 2015). Further, some studies indicate that employing integrated technology in foreign language learning enhances students' language proficiency (Al-Kathiri, 2015; Al-Okaily, 2013).

In the early 21st century, the flipped classroom approach was proposed by Baker (2000) and Lage et al. (2000). In a flipped classroom, students carry out research, watch online lectures, and take part in online discussions at home, in addition to discussing these concepts in the classroom aided by the guidance of their teacher, lecturer, or mentor. This contrasts with the traditional model of classroom instruction in which the teacher is the main focus of the lesson and the one distributing the information during class. In traditional classrooms, instruction occurs in class, and the teacher's interaction with students is confined to answering

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questions and offering guidance and feedback. This means that the teacher controls the discussion and learning (Ryback & Sanders, 1980). Then, the teacher assigns students the task of working on a problem set or from a textbook outside of school hours (Strauss, 2012). By contrast, the flipped classroom offers the advantage of allowing more explanation and interaction inside the classroom, while learning takes place outside the classroom.

In general, this approach allows teachers to spend more one-on-one time with students, and it allows students to work together collaboratively to approach lessons and learn concepts. This is an appealing alternative to working alone at home after school without anyone available to provide assistance (Strauss, 2012). Moreover, research shows that the flipped classroom method improves students' confidence (Strauss, 2012). Research suggests that the flipped classroom approach is helpful for EFL learners because it offers a flexible environment, student-centered learning, an active learning process, and meaningful dialogue between students and teachers (Ping et al., 2014). Furthermore, flipped classrooms allow instructors to spend time with EFL students both during and after class (Kostka & Marshall, 2018). Therefore, the flipped classroom approach stimulates learning through language exposure, actual vocalization, language acquisition, and immediate feedback (Gass et al., 2013). These processes take place in the flipped classroom in the form of functional activities, such as explaining the meaning behind English grammar and modeling sentence structure, which give students the technical information they need to do assignments outside of class (Kostka & Marshall, 2018). Directing the classroom away from teacher-led discourse enables the teacher and students to interact more with one another in class to work on the required skills, in this case, EFL acquisition (Kostka & Marshall, 2018).

Despite the advantages of using the flipped classroom approach for teaching EFL, as outlined by Gass et al. (2013), Kostka and Marshall (2018), and Kirk and Casenove (2019) minimal research has been undertaken in this area. In fact, many studies on the concept of the flipped classroom, like that of Park and Park (2018), who assessed the benefits of the flipped classroom for teaching adult health in nursing, have been quasi-experimental in nature. However, Ping et al. (2019) investigated the reflections and experiences of low-proficiency EFL students' experience of learning English writing in a flipped classroom at a Malaysian branch of a foreign university. The researchers considered how the students improved after their experience of being taught in a flipped classroom. The interviews revealed that the students, overall, had a good experience in a flipped classroom because there was more time to work on skills before class began, more opportunities to practice their language skills, and opportunities to engage, interact, motivate, and provide more immediate feedback during class. These advantages improved the students' language proficiency outside of class. However, participants also experienced the flipped classroom approach as boring and time-consuming (Ping et al., 2019). Moreover, regarding the efficiency of a flipped classroom for EFL students, Kang (2015) found that one disadvantage of the method is that students often failed to complete assignments on time because of the lack of supervision. Thus, while there is evidence that the flipped classroom approach to learning helps students improve their language skills, it may also be boring, take more time to complete, and result in students completing fewer assignments on time.

Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016) and Kang (2015) specifically measured the improvements of Saudi Arabian students studying EFL in a flipped classroom in terms of English grammar knowledge. The aim of Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri's (2016) study was to explore the impact of the flipped classroom strategy for teaching English grammar and its effect on the perceptions, attitudes, and performance of secondary school students' learning of English in an independent manner. The flipped classroom approach was implemented in this study by selecting videos based on the students' textbooks and uploading the videos onto a teaching website before each lesson to give students an opportunity to actively learn outside the classroom. The results of the research showed that the grammatical knowledge of the group taught in the flipped classroom was more comprehensive than that of the group taught in the traditional classroom, although there was little statistical significance. Kang (2015) offers similar results. The purpose of this study was to assess the efficiency of the flipped classroom approach and to evaluate 24 Korean university students' perceptions of this approach for studying EFL. The flipped classroom approach was implemented through lecture-oriented videos and an offline class centered on activities. Students from the flipped and regular classrooms were compared in terms of grammar and vocabulary knowledge pre- and post-instruction. The results of these assessments indicated that the students in the flipped classroom exhibited a significant increase in total knowledge of English in general as well as grammar and vocabulary.

These results indicated that both groups showed improvements after teaching, and, similar to Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri's (2016) study, there was little difference between the results achieved in a flipped classroom compared with a traditional learning environment. Thus, the results of the studies by Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016), Ping et al. (2019), and Kang (2015) indicated that Saudi Arabian, Malaysian, and Korean EFL students, respectively, had a positive experience learning English through the flipped classroom approach. However, statistical analyses of the results obtained by Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016) and Kang (2015) via a t-test strongly indicated that actual improvements in English grammatical knowledge were too small to be statistically significant. Further, in terms of gaps in the literature, an analysis of the results of the three aforementioned studies indicated that these researchers failed to identify the length of the research period. If it were only a short amount of time, this would likely explain the lack of statistical difference between the students taught in a flipped classroom and those taught in a traditional classroom. Nevertheless, the value of this research is that it demonstrates that the flipped classroom approach has the potential to improve EFL students' knowledge of English language and grammar by a small but significant amount in a short time span. Evidently, the research to date has focused on the introduction and practice of the flipped classroom technique in language teaching

(Marshall, 2014; Milman, 2012; Musallam, 2011) rather than the perception by participating EFL learners of their engagement in and value of flipped learning. Most studies in the field of language instruction (Alsowat, 2016; Basal, 2015; Hung, 2014; Mehring, 2016) also focus on the effectiveness of the flipped classroom in improving students' abilities. Hence, there is still a need for investigating the flipped technique in much detail, particularly in Saudi Arabia. The current study seeks to bridge the gap with respect to the perception of EFL learners of their engagement in and value of flipped classroom activities after introducing the technique in a Saudi language context. This research explores the differences in the EFL learners' perceptions with respect to gender.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of the flipped classroom technique as perceived by EFL learners who attended a grammar course at Community College Taibah University in 2019 after being involved in the flipped classroom structure. The perceived effectiveness of the flipped classroom was investigated with respect to two dimensions related to engagement and value for 40 male and female Saudi EFL learners. The study also attempts to investigate the potential differences among participating learners with respect to gender.

## 3. Research Questions

1. How do EFL learners perceive the use of flipped classroom techniques after being involved in a flipped classroom structure?
2. How do EFL learners perceive their engagement in the flipped activities after being involved in the flipped classroom structure?
3. How do EFL learners perceive the value of the flipped activities after being involved in the flipped classroom structure?
4. To what extent does the gender of learners affect their engagement in the flipped classroom technique?
5. To what extent does the learners' gender affect their value of the flipped classroom technique?

## Procedure of Flipped Classroom Techniques

### • Introducing the Flipped Classroom Session

The following procedures were carried out.

1. At the outset of the semester, the teacher introduced the flipped classroom technique to the students.
2. The teacher stated the goals to be achieved by the technique.
3. The teacher discussed the procedures of the sessions.
4. The teacher familiarized the students with the instructional materials to be used in the flipped classroom.
5. The teacher explained the instructions for the development of the flipped classroom activities.
6. The teacher encouraged EFL learners to work collaboratively during the activities.

### • Preparing for the Flipped Classroom Activities

1. The teacher assigned a grammatical topic i.e. Types of Questions in the course to be studied.
2. The teacher also pointed out the instructional activities of Types of Questions for homework.
3. The teacher encouraged the students to be independent learners, accessing the content at their own pace.

### • Detailing the Flipped Classroom Technique

1. EFL learners accessed and interacted with online content available on videos, YouTube, PowerPoint, and other slides at any time on their own during class time.
2. Students also worked on the assigned content under studied (e.g., types of questions as a homework assignment using the content delivered online).
3. At the actual flipped classroom session, each group discussed the assigned topic and its features in harmony with the content of the course to their peers.
4. They are asked to write down questions, take notes, and make remarks after viewing online content in a video format in the class or out the class.
5. Learners were expected to be ready to find answers for all the questions raised by their classmates.
6. Advanced students in the class time tutored their peers on their work.
7. During the flipped class, the teacher walked around the room and provided assistance as needed by students.
8. The teacher started the class by reviewing the instructional content, facilitating a short discussion or debate, and giving students feedback.
9. At the end of the learning session, the teacher outlined and presented a summary of the main concepts discussed that day during the session.

## 4. Research Instruments

A questionnaire was deemed an appropriate instrument for the purpose of this investigation. Therefore, a Likert scale was developed specifically for the purpose of this study. It was used to select specific information on

the issue of engagement with and value of flipped technique by learners. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items in two sections. The first section contained 10 items designed to collect data relevant to the engagement in flipped learning activities and process. The second section of the questionnaire included a list of items about value, including interest and attitudes toward language learning in the flipped technique.

## 5. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in accordance with the research questions and hypothesis using SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentages, and means, were used to describe the properties of the data collected. A parametric Levine's test was performed to test for equality of variances. Additionally, inferential statistics were computed using a t-test independent sample to test the significance of difference among the mean participants as stated in the null hypothesis.

## 6. Results of the Flipped Classroom Reliabilities

### • Validity

Face and content validity of the questionnaire was determined through a review by a panel of experts in the domain of foreign language pedagogy. Modification and deletion of some items were considered in the final draft of the questionnaire, as suggested by the panel.

**Table (1): Reliability of the Study**

Section	Domain	Items	Rel
A	Engagement	10	.79
B	Value	10	.86
Both domains of the questionnaire		20	.85

### • Reliabilities

Data from the pilot study were used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .86, which indicated internal consistency among the 20 questionnaire statements. Clarity, reliability, and readability of the statements on the questionnaire were measured. Table 1 reveals the statistical results of the reliability analysis of the questionnaire statements.

**Table (2): Distribution of Responses about Engagement in Flipped Classroom**

Items	Male				Female				All cases			
	Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	n	%	N	%
1.	10	50%	10	50%	7	35%	13	65%	17	42.5%	23	57.5%
2.	10	50%	10	50%	5	25%	15	75%	15	37.5%	25	62.5%
3.	13	65%	7	35%	6	30%	14	70%	19	47.5%	21	52.5%
4.	14	70%	6	30%	5	25%	15	75%	19	47.5%	21	52.5%
5.	14	70%	6	30%	5	25%	15	75%	19	47.5%	21	52.5%
6.	15	75%	5	25%	5	25%	15	75%	20	50%	20	50%
7.	17	85%	3	15%	5	25%	15	75%	22	55%	18	45%
8.	14	70%	6	30%	6	30%	14	70%	20	50%	20	50%
9.	13	65%	7	35%	5	25%	15	75%	18	45%	22	55%
10.	14	70%	6	30%	5	25%	15	75%	19	47.5%	21	52.5%

The data detailed in Table 2 revealed that percentages of male disagreement ranged between 50–85% for the questions about **engagement**, while the percentages of male agreement ranged between 15–50%. The percentages of female disagreement ranged between 25–35% to the questions about **engagement**, while the percentages of female agreement ranged between 65–75%. The percentages of responses for both genders to the questions about **engagement** ranged between 45%–62.5%.

The data also illustrate that 57.5% of the subjects claimed that they interacted frequently with their teachers in the EFL classroom. The majority of participants (62.5%) stated that they interacted frequently with their peers during class hours. Surprisingly, both genders rated equally (52.5%) on these items: 3, 4, 5, and 10. They agreed about interacting frequently with their peers outside of class hours (item 3), devoting considerable time to learning activities (item 4), participating actively in the learning process (item 5), and entering the classroom prepared to contribute (item 10). Additionally, 50% of the subjects equally agreed and disagreed on these two items: their use of what they learned by engaging in learning activities (item 6) and their high engagement in learning the content of the course (item 8). However, 55% did not agree on devoting considerable effort to meet

the learning requirements (item 7). In contrast, the majority of the subjects (55%) emphasized their involvement in the learning activities in the flipped classroom (item 9).

**Table (3): Distribution of Responses to the Value of Flipped Learning**

Items	Male				Female				All Cases			
	Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	n	%	N	%
1.	14	70%	6	30%	4	20%	16	80%	18	45%	22	55%
2.	15	75%	5	25%	6	30%	14	70%	21	52.5%	19	47.5%
3.	15	75%	5	25%	5	25%	15	75%	20	50%	20	50%
4.	15	75%	5	25%	6	30%	14	70%	21	52.5%	19	47.5%
5.	14	70%	6	30%	6	30%	14	70%	20	50%	20	50%
6.	12	60%	8	40%	2	10%	18	90%	14	35%	26	65%
7.	13	65%	7	35%	5	25%	15	75%	18	45%	22	55%
8.	13	65%	7	35%	6	30%	14	70%	19	47.5%	21	52.5%
9.	13	65%	7	35%	6	30%	14	70%	19	47.5%	21	52.5%
10.	12	60%	8	40%	5	25%	15	75%	17	42.5%	23	57.5%

According to the data in Table 3, percentages for male disagreement ranged between 60%–75% to the questions about **value**, while the percentages for male agreement ranged between 25–40%. However, the percentages for female disagreement ranged between 10–30% for the questions about **value**, while the percentages for female agreement ranged between 70–90%. Overall, the percentages of responses for both genders to the questions of **value** for agreement ranged between 47.5%–65%.

Additionally, the data displayed that the study subjects (55%) thought they were pleased with the flipped learning activities (item 1) and also believed flipped learning was a great way to learn language skills (item 7). However, they (52%) disagreed about looking forward to participating in flipped classroom activities and feeling interested in engaging in the activities (item 4). Fifty percent of the subjects favored assistance in grasping the content of the course through the flipped technique and favored knowledge acquisition outside the classroom (item 5). The majority of the subjects (65%) indicated they were pleased to watch the online recourses (item 6). Of the subjects, 52.5% said they developed positive attitudes toward learning (item 8) and felt content with the studies using the flipped classroom technique (item 9). They (57.5%) claimed that the flipped technique allowed them to learn at their own pace.

In summary, the study results indicated the efficacy of the flipped technique for teaching EFL at College of Community in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the female participants revealed greater engagement in flipped activities and the learning process during hours outside the classroom than the male learners, and the female students also expressed greater value of this innovative technique. The current study provides evidence of more female engagement by devoting considerable effort and time in learning activities than male learner engagement.

## 7. Results of Research Hypotheses

### First Research Hypothesis

To verify the hypothesis assuming there were no statistically significant differences between EFL male and female means with respect to the use of flipped classroom techniques, the mean scores and standard deviations were calculated. Two independent samples (t-test) were used, and the results are shown in the following tables.

**Table (4): Results of the Learners' Mean Scores**

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	20	50.4000	5.12373	1.14570
Female	20	71.5000	3.95368	.88407

The mean score of male learners in the use of flipped activities was 50.4000 with a standard deviation of 5.12373, while the mean score of females was 71.5000 with a standard deviation of 3.95368. Evidently, the female learners' mean score ( $m=71.5$ ) was higher than that of the male group ( $m=50.4$ ). These results suggest that participating females were more willing to implement the flipped activities than male learners.



**Table (5): Results of the T-test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
VAR00002	Equal variances assumed	1.213	.278	-14.580	38	.000	-21.10000	1.44714	-24.02958	-18.17042
	Equal variances not assumed			-14.580	35.704	.000	-21.10000	1.44714	-24.03578	-18.16422

Table 5 shows that the calculated value of T (14.580) was reached at the degree of freedom (38), and the value of significance (.000) was less than 0.05, meaning that the difference is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis assuming that there are no statically significant differences in EFL male and female means with respect to the use of flipped classroom techniques was rejected.

**Second Research Hypothesis**

To check the hypothesis postulating that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female means with respect to engagement in flipped classroom techniques, the mean scores and standard deviations were calculated. Two independent samples (t-test) were used, and the results are shown in the following tables.

**Table (6): Results of the Learners' Mean Scores**

VAR00022	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00062 1.00	20	25.5000	9.10456	2.03586
2.00	20	35.7000	10.91643	2.44099

The mean score of male learners for engagement in the flipped activities was 25.50, with a standard deviation of 9.104, while the mean score of female learners was 35.70, with a standard deviation of 10.916. Evidently, the female learners' mean score (m=25.5) was higher than that of the male group (m=35.7). These results suggest that females engaged actively in the flipped activities more than male learners.

**Table (7): Results of the T-test**

		Leven's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
VAR00062	Equal variances assumed	.774	.394	-3.209	38	.003	-10.20000	3.17855	-16.63463	-3.76537
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.209	36.814	.003	-10.20000	3.17855	-16.64145	-3.75855

Table 7 shows that the calculated value of T reached -3.209 at the degree of freedom (38), and the value of significance (.003) was less than 0.05, indicating that the difference is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis assuming there are no statistically significant differences between EFL male and female means with respect to engagement in flipped classroom activities was rejected.

**Third Research Hypothesis**

To verify the hypothesis stating that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female means with respect to their value of flipped classroom techniques, the mean scores and standard deviations were calculated. Two independent samples (t-test) were utilized, and the results are shown in the following tables.

**Table (8): Results of the Learners' Mean Scores**

VAR00022	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00063 1.00	20	24.9000	8.96132	2.00381
2.00	20	35.8000	11.19962	2.50431

The mean score of male learners on the value of flipped activities was 24.90, with a standard deviation of 8.96132, while the mean score of female learners was 35.80, with a standard deviation of 11.19962. Evidently, the female learners' mean score (m=35.80) was higher than that of the male group (m=24.90). These results suggest that females believed in the value of the flipped activities more than male learners.

**Table (9): Results of the T-test**

	Leven's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
VAR00062 Equal variances assumed	.654	.424	-3.398	38	.002	-10.90000	3.20731	-17.39286	-4.40714
Equal variances not assumed			-3.398	36.256	.002	-10.90000	3.20731	-17.40313	-4.39687

Table 9 illustrates that the calculated value of T reached -3.398 at the degree of freedom (38), and the value of significance (.002) was less than 0.05, indicating that the difference is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis assuming that there are no statistically significant differences between EFL male and female means with respect to their value of flipped classroom techniques was rejected.

## 8. Conclusion

Based on the results of this research, the following conclusions were drawn. There are significant differences in male and female learners' perceptions of their engagement in and value of the flipped classroom technique. The flipped technique seems for female participants to be applicable and useful to language learning as contrasted to male participants. The data also indicated that the flipped technique in language instruction may be a successful innovation in the Saudi learning context in the future. This finding is in agreement with Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri's (2016) finding which showed a positive experience whilst learning English through the flipped technique. The integration of flipped classrooms into the language teaching process led to frequent interaction with teachers and peers, active engagement in online language recourses and activities, and an increase in motivation and interest for studying. These findings of the current study are consistent with those of Chen et al. (2014). However, male learners reported less interest in the flipped technique. It was concluded that they lack desire and interest in acquiring knowledge outside the classroom.

The results and conclusion of this study generate the following recommendations for future research studies. Further data are needed to address factors that enhance learners' active involvement in knowledge acquisition outside the classroom and promote interest in learning through flipped classroom activities. Future research studies should provide online language resources to enhance flipped language instruction. Educators in the domain of EFL should be encouraged to adopt this innovative technique and integrate it into their language teaching context. More data is needed to examine areas and models of expanding flipped learning in language pedagogy. Studies are also needed to explore more contexts in various levels of education.

### Bio:

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