

Flipped Language Learning for Arts Students

Gulnara Gorgiladze

Batumi Art Teaching University, Georgia,  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5136-6334>

Abstract: Flipped learning is a teaching methodology which holds most theoretical learning in asynchronous regime online, after which practical classes are conducted face-to-face. This constructivist methodology became especially valuable during and after the total online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The greatest academic benefits of this methodology have been found in language, technology, and health-science (i.e., skills-based) courses. Among the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) directions, teaching arts students offers considerable advantages, as it enables the teachers to pre-teach the ESP language (terminology), as well as lets the students participate in virtual excursions to museums, view other videos related to the topic under study at the pace most comfortable for them, so that they are well prepared to the discussion and other communicative activities in class. A survey was conducted among students of an art university in Georgia. The conclusion was made that the majority of students like the methodology, especially if the homework part provides enough support in language (vocabulary, grammar) needed for the comprehension of the video materials.

Keywords: Flipped learning, Asynchronous regime, Face-to-face learning, English for specific purposes, English for arts students

Citation: Gorgiladze, G. (2023). Flipped Language Learning for Arts Students. In M. Koc, O. T. Ozturk & M. L. Ciddi (Eds.), *Proceedings of ICRES 2023-- International Conference on Research in Education and Science* (pp. 113-119), Cappadocia, Turkiye. ISTES Organization.

Introduction

Flipped learning is a teaching methodology which holds most theoretical learning in asynchronous regime online, after which practical classes are conducted face-to-face. The idea of ‘flipped’ (or opposite to traditional) chemistry lessons was first suggested by Bergmann and Sams (2012): “Basically the concept of a flipped class is this: that which is traditionally done in class is now done at home, and that which is traditionally done as homework is now completed in class” (p.13). First, they found that using recorded classes helps students who miss classes to catch up with the class. Further, their students decided to apply the pre-recordings as homework – they watched them, and did their best to understand. The explanation in the classroom was based on students’ questions and helped them understand better what they had watched, so the educational process was student (and not teacher or coursebook)-centered. This enabled the researchers to personalize the face-to-face classes, as every student had a chance to ask questions and receive answers. The flipped class was more authentic than a regular one, as it moved out of classroom (videos could show processes in a lab or in a factory, etc.). The students could record their projects and share them with other students, while the discussion would take place in

class. As theoretical learning was done at home while listening to the ‘lectures’, in class students could develop (in case of language teaching, communicative) skills and gain practical experience. Teachers in flipped classrooms are not necessarily the material presenters: they are rather tutorial authors and/or selectors.

With time, the ideas of flipped classroom spread from science classes to language classes. Contemporary foreign/second language teaching is focused on communication and not learning about the language (Ellis, 2012; Loewen, 2014). However, students to some degree need to learn about language (e.g., vocabulary meaning, grammar rules in order to do admission and language level defining tests) and culture (to use the language appropriately) as well, and this can efficiently be done via the videos given to students as homework. As videos are watched individually, the language teacher can adjust the selected materials to the students’ language levels (e.g., videos on the same topic, but of different difficulty level) and interests (e.g., on sports topic winter and summer, male and female, athletic and artistic sports can be offered). In Brown and Lee (2015), Nation’s (2007) ten principles were interpreted for flipped language classes: comprehensible input through listening and reading, using activities raising consciousness (pre-listening or pre-reading tasks), variety, collaborative activities, deliberate learning of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary in authentic context, developing language learning strategies (offering relevant videos), extensive listening/reading, focus on meaning, re-using the materials when/if needed, continuous assessment.

Of course, flipped language learning was characterized not only by the advantages discussed above, but also by some challenges. Cunningham (2017), for example, mentions that it is not easy to find reading/listening and video materials that exactly fit the syllabus and meet the students’ needs and language level. The search of relevant materials, due to it, is time-consuming. Students who did not apply this sort of pre-teaching materials would come to class, unable to participate in the activities. Then the teacher might need to present the materials to his/her students quickly. However, a more communicative outcome may be found – a brief small group activity can be organized in which students who did the homework have their peers quickly informed about it.

ESP and Flipped Learning

“In comparison with teaching EGP (English for general purpose), teaching ESP usually faces a lot more challenges. Focusing on the specific needs of the learners based on the need analysis, concentrating more on language in context and on the students’ need to acquire a set of professional skills and particular job-related to each function, ESP remains a major testing experience for every teacher in charge of it” (Fălăuș, 2017, p. 6). As teaching and learning ESP entails additional difficulties compared to teaching English for General Purposes, special approaches are needed to teach it efficiently. Flipped learning is one of such possible approaches.

According to Lee (2017), while applying flipped learning in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes “the impact on the student experience is significantly positive and with a higher level of satisfaction by students especially for those students who have TOEIC test experience before” (p. 4995). Parvaneh, Zoghi and Asadi (2020) found a significant positive effect of flipped classroom method on autonomy, which also reduced the

anxiety of Iranian language learners.

Hsiao (2021) held a quasi-experimental study with students who did not major in English, but studied it for Specific Purposes (ESP). The results of his study revealed that the experimental group students developed significantly higher self-efficacy and received higher course grades both for English and specialty courses than the control group. Moreover, the students' higher-order cognitive skills (critical thinking) improved. The students became able to make numerous associations between ideas. Fard et al. (2022) study demonstrated the positive influence of the flipped classroom on the students' task engagement and their critical thinking skills. Ebadi et al. (2022) studied the effects of flipped vocabulary learning via an online dictionary on EFL learners' listening comprehension. The students had to learn new vocabulary (the list of 20 vocabulary units per lesson offered to the students) via online dictionaries. They had to pay attention to the definition, antonyms, synonyms and the part of speech the words belonged to. The findings of the study suggested that flipped vocabulary learning can be applied as an effective instructional tool for the development of listening skills.

Therefore, flipped learning can benefit ESP (arts) students in the following ways:

- it enables the students who missed the class to catch up with their peers;
- it provides a comfortable learning environment (anxiety-devoid, timing and speed, number of repetitions);
- it is student-centered;
- it is authentic (language, activities);
- it enhances the communication in class;
- it enhances collaboration and cooperation;
- it helps develop their vocabulary (terminology) skills (especially, through electronic dictionaries and encyclopedias);
- it develops their reading and listening skills (increases the volume);
- it increases students' motivation, engagement and satisfaction.

Flipped ESP Teaching during the Pandemic

This constructivist methodology became especially valuable during and after the total online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. While flipped learning before the pandemic involved online homework and offline classes, during the pandemic both stages were realized online: online homework done by the students asynchronously and online classes in the synchronous regime. For those students who were already accustomed to flipped learning, getting adjusted to fully online learning was less painful. Montaner-Villalba (2021) assessed the students' perception of the development of academic writing skills through flipped learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; the results of their study revealed that the students assessed the importance of general English writing skills with a mean of 4.4 on a 5-point Likert scale, while they assessed their own general English writing skills at 2.8 level and Business English writing skills at 2.81. In students' assessment, their

competence in Business English writing through flipped learning increased a lot – to 4.7. Mundir et al. (2022) compared face-to-face, flipped (homework online and classwork face-to-face) and completely online learning of vocabulary and found that both online and flipped groups outperformed the face-to-face group, while the flipped group had the highest results.

Method

A survey was conducted among students of an art university in Georgia. The tool used was a researcher-made questionnaire in a 5-point Likert scale format. The questionnaire was assessed for content validity by three professors in the relevant field and by a test-retest procedure for internal consistency (reliability) with 10 students who further were not involved in the study. R was found to be equal to 0.92, which is quite high.

Four flipped classes were held to a mixed-specialty group student (totally 18 students) during one month. The researcher selected the reading / watching materials and made up the tasks. For the first class, the teacher shared with the students a text selected online dealing with their specialty. There was a list of vocabulary with definitions, translations and examples. The students had to fulfil gap-filling and multiple-choice tasks on the vocabulary online at home. For the second class, the students were asked to find online a text about his/her favourite artist, to make up a list of key terms (minimum 20) used in the text, with definitions, translations and examples. The results of their work had to be uploaded to the group created for the purposes of the research. In class they had to present a short abstract of the text and answer their peers' questions on it. For the third class, the teacher chose a short video "What art museums are for?" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThyY7efQJP0>). Several sentences from the video were grammatically analyzed for the students. The students had to fulfil gap-filling and multiple-choice tasks on the grammar emphasized in the teacher's materials online at home. And the final class, the teacher asked the students to find a short video about a museum of art and to upload the links to the group. During the face-to-face class 2-3 students chosen at random during the class demonstrated the videos and answered their peers' questions on it.

The structure of the classes was defined by the fact that flipped teaching arts students offers considerable advantages, such as it enables the teachers to pre-teach the ESP language (terminology), as well as lets the students participate in virtual excursions to museums, view other videos related to the topic under study at the pace most comfortable for them, so that they are well prepared to the discussion and other communicative activities in class. The questionnaire was held online.

Results

The students mentioned to the teacher that they were especially pleased with the classes when it was the teacher who provided the vocabulary included in the reading and in particular in listening texts. The questionnaire was online for one week and then closed. The obtained results are presented below.

Table 1. Questionnaire results

Item / descriptive statistics	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1. Have you ever before experienced the flipped learning?	18 (100%)	0	0	0	0	1	.00
2. Were the four classes held as flipped learning difficult for you?	5 (28%)	8 (44%)	2 (11%)	1 (6%)	2 (11%)	2.28	1.27
3. Did these classes help you more than usually to learn the vocabulary / terminology?	0	2 (11%)	1 (6%)	7 (39%)	8 (44%)	4.17	.99
4. Was this way of dealing with grammar comfortable for you?	1 (6%)	2 (11%)	3 (17%)	5 (28%)	7 (39%)	3.83	1.24
5. Do you think that the flipped classes contributed to the development of your reading skills?	0	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	7 (39%)	9 (50%)	4.33	.84
6. Do you think that the flipped classes contributed to the development of your listening skills?	0	0	0	8 (44%)	10 (56%)	4.56	.51
7. Did you enjoy the flipped classes?	0	0	2 (11%)	9 (50%)	7 (39%)	4.28	.67
8. Would you like to go on learning in this way?	0	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	6 (33%)	10 (56%)	4.39	.85

The standard deviation for items 2 and 4 is higher than 1, which reveals that on these issues the opinions of the respondents differed significantly, on other items their opinions are quite unanimous. All students have never experienced flipped classes before ($M=1$). The majority of them (83%) did not view the approach as a difficult one ($M=2.28$). They confirmed that the flipped classes helped them improve their vocabulary ($M=4.17$), grammar ($M=3.83$), reading ($M=4.33$) and listening ($M=4.56$) skills. The majority of them (89%; $M=4.28$) enjoyed the flipped classes and would like to go on learning in this way (89%, $M=4.39$).

Discussion

The lack of Georgian students' awareness about flipped classes in the current research is in line with that of

Korean students (Kim et al. 2015). Concerning the difficulties of flipped learning, Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018) mention only the technical ones (availability of the necessary technologies in class and at home), otherwise “the participants considered the flipped classroom exciting, motivating, and engaging” (p. 275), which is in line with the findings of the current research. The current study stated the positive impact of flipped language learning on the development of vocabulary skills. Likewise, Kirmizi and Kömeç (2019) found a positive impact of flipped classes on their students’ vocabulary skills. Pudín (2017) found that the students benefitted from flipped learning of grammar, which is in line with the given study. Karimi and Hamzavi (2017) found a beneficial effect of flipped learning on reading schools, while Amiryousefi (2019) revealed its positive impact on listening and speaking skills, as well as engagement in the class activities. This is relevant to the findings of the current study.

Conclusion

Flipped language learning is beneficial for arts students, as it improved their vocabulary, grammar, listening and learning skills more than the traditional classes with no online pre-teaching provided as their homework. Although students have not earlier experienced flipped classes, they did not find them difficult, on the opposite, they enjoyed them and would like to continue such learning. Their attitude was especially positive when the homework part provided pre-teaching of vocabulary and grammar needed for the comprehension of the video materials.

Recommendations

Using virtual excursions to museums and other videos as homework is highly recommended for teaching English to arts students. Flipped classes in which sometimes the teacher does the preliminary explanation and sometimes the learners themselves develop the language materials as homework, and then a big part of the face-to-face class can be dedicated to communicative activities will be both enjoyable and effective.

References

- Amiryousefi, M. (2019). The incorporation of flipped learning into conventional classes to enhance EFL learners’ L2 speaking, L2 listening, and engagement. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 13(2), 147-161. <http://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2017.1394307>
- Bergmann, J. & Sams, A. (2012). *Flip your classroom: Reach every student in every class every day*. Washington DC: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2015). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy (4th ed.)*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- Cunningham, U. (2017). Flipping the language classroom. *The New Zealand Language Teacher*, 43, 41-50.
- Ebadi, S., Nozari, F. & Salman, A.R. (2022). Investigating the effects of flipped vocabulary learning via an

- online dictionary on EFL learners' listening comprehension. *Smart Learning Environments*, 9(28), 1-15.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-022-00209-7>
- Ellis, R. (2012). *Language teaching research and language pedagogy*. Malden, MA: WileyBlackwell.
- Fäläuş, A. (2017). The current challenges of teaching ESP. In *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering. Innovative Ideas in Science* 200, 012059. pp.1-7. IOP Publishing.
[.http://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/200/1/012059](http://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/200/1/012059)
- Fard, Z.R., Shahrokhi, M., & Talebinezhad, M.R. (2022). Flipped classroom approach in ESP courses: Focus on ESP students' critical thinking and engagement. *Journal of Foreign Language Research*, 12(1), 74-93.
<http://doi.org/10.22059/JFLR.2021.331574.901>
- Farrah, M. & Qawasmeh, A. (2018). English students' attitudes towards using flipped classrooms in language learning at Hebron University. *Research in English Language Pedagogy*, 6(2), 275-294.
- Hsiao, I-C. V., Hung, S.-T. A., & Huang, H.-T. D. (2021). The flipped classroom approach in an English for specific purposes (ESP) course: A quasi-experimental study on learners' self-efficacy, study process, and learning performances. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2021.1976329>
- Kim, S., Jin, M. & Lim, K.Y. (2015). Research trends on flipped learning in South Korea. In S. Carliner, C. Fulford & N. Ostashewski (Eds.). *Proceedings of EdMedia 2015--World Conference on Educational Media and Technology* (pp. 1251-1255). Montreal, Quebec, Canada: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).
- Karimi, A., & Hamzavi, R. (2017). The effect of flipped model of instruction on EFL learners' reading comprehension: Learners' attitudes in focus. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 8(1), 95-103.
- Kirmizi & Kömeç (2019). The impact of the flipped classroom on receptive and productive vocabulary learning. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 15(2), 437 – 449.
- Lee, B. (2017). TELL us ESP in a flipped classroom. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 13(8), 4995-5007. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eurasia.2017.00978a>
- Loewen, S. (2014). *Introduction to instructed second language acquisition*. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Montaner-Villalba, S. (2021). Students' perceptions of ESP academic writing skills through flipped learning during COVID-19. *Journal of Language and Education*, 7(4), 107-115.
- Nation, P. (2007). The four strands. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 2-13.
- Parvaneh, H., Zoghi, M., & Asadi, N. (2020). Flipped classroom approach: Its effect on learner autonomy and language anxiety of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Foreign Language Research*, 10 (2), 330-347.
- Pudin, C.S.J. (2017). Exploring a flipped learning approach in teaching grammar for ESL Students. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 51-64.