

The Effects of the Flipped Classroom in Teaching English Listening Skills: Vietnamese EFL Learners' Experience

Nguyen Trung Kien¹, Nguyen Thi Phuong Hong²

¹ FPT University, Vietnam

² Can Tho University, Vietnam

Abstract — Listening is a crucial language skill to be mastered in order to obtain success in not only one's academic but daily life. However, the limited time of in-class learning may possibly hinder EFL learners' acquisition and make them lack opportunities to express their ideas freely and creatively. For that matter mentioned, the purpose of this current research was to investigate the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of Flipped Classroom model in learning listening skills. To this aim, 18 learners were selected and then assigned into a group for experiment. The Flipped Classroom model was introduced and applied into teaching to the students for the same listening course content. The results from the analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that the students had positive attitudes towards the use of Flipped Classroom model in learning listening skills. From these findings, pedagogy suggestions are discussed to further the use of this model in teaching.

Keywords — Flipped Classroom model, learners' attitudes, listening skills, TOEIC listening

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Nunan (2003), among the four macro-skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, listening has long been considered as "the Cinderella skill in second language learning". Both language teachers and students tend to overlook the importance of listening comprehension because they are so focused on their ultimate goal, speaking, that they fail to recognize the need to develop functional listening comprehension skills as a prerequisite to developing speaking skills (Chastain, 1988). In Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) field, many classes pay little attention to listening, and there is often no sustained support to guide students through the process of becoming better listeners. Although they are exposed to more listening activities in classrooms today, learners are still left to develop their listening ability on their own with little direct support from the teachers. As a result, a broader attention from academia and methodologists is required in order to put forward new effective approaches of teaching this skill.

The fast development of technology paves the way for many stage-of-the-art pedagogical approaches which have been introduced and applied successfully. Taking into consideration that in-class learning with limited hours may possibly hinder the students' acquisition, a trendy teaching model – the Flipped Classroom model was introduced and was believed to be able to provide assistance to make the teaching and learning more efficient. For the possible advantages that the Flipped Classroom model could bring to the learning of EFL students, we had a passion to conduct research with an aim to examine learners' attitudes towards the use of this model.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Listening

According to Richards & Renandya (2002), since teaching methods emphasized productive skills and listening was characterized as a passive activity, listening received little attention in language teaching and learning. The definitions of listening skills are stated variously by field experts. According to Johnson (1951) and Hampleman (1958), listening skill is the communication process, and it is used to distinguish words from other words. Howatt and Dakin (1974) defined listening as the ability to recognize and comprehend what others are saying. This entails comprehending a speaker's accent or pronunciation, as well as his grammar and



vocabulary, as well as his meaning. Sharing the same point of view, Brown (1991) mentioned that listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get the meaning from something we hear.

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that listening is an active and interactive process in which a listener receives speech sounds and attempts to understand what is being said. To respond effectively to oral communication, the listener tries to understand the intended message of the oral text. (Solak & Erdem, 2016).

B. Models of the listening process

The Bottom-Up Model

The bottom-up model of listening was the first to be developed by researchers in the 1940s and 1950s. In this model, listeners build understanding by starting with the smallest units of the acoustic message: individual sounds, or phonemes. These are then put together to form words, which are then combined to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. Finally, individual sentences come together to form ideas, concepts, and connections between them. According to this model, the sender encodes a message, which is then transmitted as a signal along the communication channel and decoded by the receiver. Successful communication is guaranteed if the channel is free of deficiencies and both the sender and the receiver are using the same code. This model states that communication can occur without reference to the speaker, hearer, or larger context.

The Top-Down Model

Top-down models emphasize the use of prior knowledge rather than relying on individual sounds and words when processing a text. Researchers came up with the top-down model after noticing that subjects cannot identify truncated sounds in isolation from the words they are part of, but they can identify truncated words if they are given a specific context. According to Wilson (2003), when learners listen to a text about which they have no prior knowledge, they use top-down processing to compensate for their lack of knowledge. Teachers can stimulate the top-down process by showing relevant pictures or providing key words before the listening activity. As a result, students can use their prior knowledge to compensate for unfamiliar vocabulary. Giving a series of pictures or a sequence of events, or predicting the relationship between the people in the listening text are other top-down listening activities.

C. The Flipped Classroom model

Despite the growing interest in and popularity of Flipped Classroom model, no universally accepted definition or model exists. Baker (2000) introduced the term "classroom flip" around the same time that Lage et al. (2000) coined the term "inverted classroom" in the context of higher education. Inverting the classroom, according to Lage et al. (2000), means that "event that has traditionally taken place inside the classroom now take place outside the classroom and vice versa" (p. 32). In general, a flipped or inverted classroom involves a shift in learning activities in both space and time.

The term "flipped classroom" refers to an instructional approach that includes the use of educational video materials for out-of-class learning as well as regular face-to-face meetings for in-class learning. The terms "flipped classroom" and "inverted classroom" are commonly used interchangeably these days; however, in this thesis, only the term "flipped classroom" is used because it is also the term that is commonly found in the literature search.

D. The Benefits and Challenges of Implementing Flipped Classroom model

The flipped classroom has the potential to be a highly effective and beneficial educational method. According to Afrilyasanti, Cahyono, and Astuti (2016), there are numerous advantages to using the flipped classroom model in teaching, including effective use of class time; more active learning opportunities; effective (one-on-one) interactions between students and teacher, and among students; students' responsibility for learning; and addressing multiple learning styles. Moreover, the flipped classroom allows teachers to gain a better understanding of their students' understanding of information and learning, potentially improving student-teacher interaction (Roehl, Reddy, & Shannon, 2013).

Along with its many advantages, however, some challenges have been identified. Learners who have been exposed to traditional education may be resistant to this new model (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). Du, Fu & Wang (2014) discovered that in a flipped classroom model, less motivated students are more likely to get less work

done. This occurs because in a flipped classroom, students learn knowledge and skills at their own paces, relying heavily on their own motivation. In addition to that, the teacher or instructional designers may find developing or designing classroom materials such as videos during the model's implementation process to be too demanding (Enfield, 2013).

III. THE STUDY

A. Research question

The research question that guided the study reported on in this paper was: "What are the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of Flipped Classroom model in learning listening skills?"

B. Participants

In this study, 18 EFL learners (most of them are students from different schools and office workers in Can Tho city) were chosen by using a convenience sampling technique and then assigned a class for being treated with the Flipped Classroom model. All participants are students from TOEIC classes in a language center in Can Tho city, Vietnam, aged between 18 and 30 years old. All of them had to take a placement test to determine their language skill levels to be assigned to the same course.

C. Instrument

The data collection tool in this research was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Johnson's (2013) and Jaster's (2017) questionnaires to elicit the data for the Research Question. To be more specific, the questionnaire consists of 18 items classified into 4 clusters, namely Mastery of the main contents of the course, Evaluation of provided previewing materials on Google Classroom, Evaluation of class time, and Challenges of Flipped Classroom. This section using the five-point Likert scale of the level of agreement ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5) was used to investigate EFL learners' attitudes towards the 4 above-mentioned aspects of implementing Flipped Classroom model. The question items of each cluster were then mixed randomly in order to avoid transparency and enhance the internal validity and reliability.

D. Procedure

At the beginning of the listening course, the Flipped Classroom approach was implemented to teach the class in order for the students to experience how the model worked. The implementation of the Flipped Classroom model was monitored during the study. The pre-class materials for the experimental group generally include must-watch recorded videos (the duration of the videos was 15-30 minutes), supplementary handouts, and online practices. Specifically, students were required to watch the videos, read the handouts, and work on some online exercises on Google Form prior to class. Then, they joined in-class activities to reflect on, discuss, and practice what they had learned. After the intervention period, the questionnaire was used to collect data. After being gathered, the data were examined using SPSS software, version 26.

E. Data analysis

A set of data analysis was performed on SPSS version 26. First, the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was assessed by computing Cronbach's alpha. Second, a Descriptive Statistics Test was run to examine the overall learners' attitudes towards the use of Flipped Classroom model (Mean of each item, Mean of each cluster, and Mean of the 18 questionnaire items). Finally, a One-Sample T-Test was conducted to check whether the mean score of learners' attitudes was statistically different from the test value of 4.0, a high level of agreement on the five-degree scale to determine the level of the attitudes.

IV. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the study regard to students' attitudes towards the Flipped Classroom model.

A. EFL learners' attitudes towards Flipped Classroom in the first aspect of Mastery of the course content.

A Descriptive Statistic Test was run to check the overall mean score of EFL learners' attitudes towards the first aspect of Mastery of the course content. The mean score of the 5 items is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR CLUSTER 1

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean	18	3.40	4.40	3.83	.316

Regarding Oxford's (1990) scale, the overall mean score is at a high level ($M=3.83$, $SD=.31$). It can be inferred that the respondents felt that the Flipped Classroom helped them learn the course contents more effectively than the traditional classroom and that they were able to acquire the essential knowledge and skills needed for the course.

Further exploration into students' perceived benefits of Flipped Classroom model, the 5 items were categorized into another Descriptive Statistic Test was calculated and the results are illustrated in the table below.

TABLE 2.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EACH QUESTION ITEM IN CLUSTER 1

Variables		M	SD
Item 1	I believe that I was able to learn the course contents better with Flipped Classroom instruction than with traditional lecture-based one.	4.11	.832
Item 2	The Flipped Classroom model helped me understand better the format and elements of the listening tasks.	4.17	.857
Item 7	I feel that I have learned how to do Main idea questions well in flipped classroom.	3.77	.784
Item 8	I feel that I have learned how to do Detail questions well in flipped classroom.	3.89	.758
Item 9	I feel that I have learned how to do Inference questions well in flipped classroom.	3.22	.647

Based on the results presented above, the Flipped Classroom model did help the students in learning the content of the lessons, specifically the format and the elements of the listening tasks. Moreover, regarding the listening sub-skills, the students appeared to be the most confident in doing Main idea ($M=3.77$) and Detail questions ($M=3.89$) using Flipped Classroom and the least in doing Inference idea questions ($M=3.22$), which was confirmed in the analysis of their posttest results. The initial reason for this lowest mark seems to be due to the nature of the questions themselves and further explanations would be presented in the qualitative results analysis.

B. EFL learners' attitudes towards Flipped Classroom in the second aspect of Evaluation of provided previewing materials on Google Classroom.

The second cluster named Evaluation of provided previewing materials on Google Classroom consists of four questions asking the students to evaluate the provided materials before each class. The mean score of 3.56 which is by far higher than scale 3 on the five-point scale of the questionnaire. This result means that the students had relatively positive attitudes towards the prepared provided materials on Google Classroom.

TABLE 3:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR CLUSTER 2

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean	18	3.00	4.50	3.56	.407

A One-Sample T-Test was conducted to check whether there was a difference between the mean score of 3.56 and the test value of 3.6, a high value of agreement. The result revealed that the difference was not statistically significant ($t=-.463$, $p=.649>0.05$), which means that the students highly valued the online materials prepared by the teacher.

TABLE 4.
MEAN OF THE CLUSTER 2 RESULTS COMPARES TO THE TEST VALUE

One-Sample T-Test Statistics			
Test Value = 3.6			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	-.463	17	.649

Then, another Descriptive Statistics test was calculated to dig deeper into how students responded to the items in terms of quantity, relevance, diversity of types and usefulness of the online previewing materials.

TABLE 5.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EACH QUESTION ITEM IN CLUSTER 2

Variables		M	SD
Item 6	I think that the number of provided materials before class was sufficient to meet each lesson's objectives.	3.39	.608
Item 10	I found all the materials reliable and relevant to each lesson's objectives.	3.56	.705
Item 13	The provided materials were of various types (videos, handouts).	3.33	.767
Item 14	With Flipped Classroom model, I could study at my own pace thanks to the availability and accessibility of all necessary online materials.	3.95	.758

It is notable from Table 5 that the highest score belongs to the usefulness of the online materials ($M_{item14}=3.95$) which was a great help for the students to learn by their own pace. The restrictions of time and place to learn were no longer considered as big problems for them thanks to the Flipped Classroom. Although the students responded positively about the relevance of all the materials, their satisfaction with the quantity and diversity of the materials was not at high level ($M_{item6}=3.39$ and $M_{item13}=3.33$). These results could be explained by the fact that the main forms for each lesson were only videos and handouts with a limited number of contents presented. Given the fact that the researcher actually had a month to prepare all the contents for the course and the time allowed for each Flipped lesson was also limited, the restriction to the quantity and diversity of the materials was unavoidable.

C. EFL learners' attitudes towards Flipped Classroom in the third aspect of Evaluation of class time.

The third cluster consists of 4 items with regard to EFL learners' attitudes towards the class time used in the Flipped class. The mean score of the cluster and each item of it are shown in the table below.

TABLE 6.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR CLUSTER 3 AND EACH QUESTION ITEM

Variables		M	SD
General Mean Score of Cluster 3		3.90	.322
Item 3	I liked being able to speak with my instructor during class and receive individual help when working on the assignment.	3.44	.784
Item 4	Flipped classroom offered me more opportunities to collaborate with my classmates during class time.	3.89	.900

Item 11	The Flipped Classroom model made me confident in asking questions in the class and seek clarifications.	4.06	.640
Item 16	I had more time to practice in class with Flipped Classroom.	4.22	.647

In general, the mean score of how students evaluated the class time spent in the Flipped class was 3.90, which means the students appreciated the use of class time. The items included were also perceived relatively positively, with mean scores ranging from 3.44 to 4.22. Specifically, Item 4, 11, 16 which were perceived high suggested that the learners enjoyed spending time working with their classmates, and felt more confident in asking questions to find out the answers. Also, the highest mean score of 4.22 indicates that they had more time for practice in the class instead of listening to hour-long lectures. On the other hand, the result of Item 3 (M=3.44) which was the lowest score could be explained by the researcher's observation that there were few students who came to him for individual help and support during the in-class time. The reasons for this might be because they felt more comfortable discussing the homework problems with their friends or asking questions in front of the class rather than individually.

D. EFL learners' attitudes towards Flipped Classroom in the fourth aspect of Challenges of Flipped Classroom model.

For this final cluster, 5 question items were employed to investigate the attitudes of the learners towards the challenges that they faced with the Flipped Classroom model. The mean score of the fourth cluster and each item of it are shown in the table below.

TABLE 7.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR CLUSTER 4 AND EACH QUESTION ITEM

Variables	M	SD
General Mean Score of Cluster 4	2.24	.333
Item 5 The teacher was not very technologically experienced in implementing the Flipped Classroom model.	2.11	.583
Item 12 My technological skills were not sufficient enough to study with the Flipped Classroom.	1.83	.857
Item 15 Teacher's instructions on how to use Google Classroom were not clear enough.	2.28	.752
Item 17 I often had technical problems in watching recorded materials at home.	3.00	.686
Item 18 I usually didn't have enough time to do the required online activities or assignments before class.	2.00	.767

As observed from the table above, the general mean score of Cluster 4 (M=2.24) was at a low level of agreement which suggests that the students did not perceive the challenges of implementing Flipped Classroom into their learning. A closer look into each item of Cluster 4 revealed that the participants felt confident with their technological skills to learn with the Flipped instructions with the mean score of this item being 1.83. Moreover, the students also found how the teacher delivered the instructions on Flipped Classroom clear enough (M=2.28). Item 17, which received the highest score (M=3.00), suggests that technical problems were still considered one of the challenges for some students when they did the online activities at home. The explanation for this problem may be because of their Internet connection or the Google Classroom platform itself in streaming videos.

V. DISCUSSION

This study found a large number of appealing results. Some of them are similar to those of the previous studies mentioned in the literature review. In this section, the main findings of the current study were discussed and concluded relating to the research questions.

The findings from the questionnaires revealed that students had a high positive attitude towards the use of Flipped Classroom in almost all respects which were asked. Regarding the first aspect of how students evaluated the acquisition of the main content, the questionnaire analysis suggested that the students felt that the Flipped Classroom helped them learn the course contents more effectively than the traditional classroom and that they were able to acquire the essential knowledge and skills needed for the course. This finding was in line with the study of Stone (2012). In her study at the University of Missouri-Columbia, she discovered that more than half of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the FC's positive statements, which were that the FC helped students "study more throughout the unit", "learn more than they would have if they had done straight lecture" and "identify concepts they need to study more".

The second aspect of how students evaluated the previewing materials on Google Classroom also received positive feedback with a mean score of 3.56 from the questionnaire data analysis. The diversity and relevance of the documents were also viewed favorably. Compared to the study conducted by Think (2021), who also tried to explore the students' attitudes towards the materials used in the Flipped Classroom, the diversity of the materials received the highest level of satisfaction whereas, in the current research, this aspect was evaluated the lowest. The fact that the only main forms for each course were videos and handouts with a limited number of materials offered may help to explain these outcomes. The availability and accessibility of the documents which was perceived as the highest ($M=3.99$) suggested that students highly valued how the materials were easily accessed and organized on Google Classroom. This echoed the results found in El Sakka (2016)'s which claimed that with the use of the Flipped Classroom model, students can watch or read the materials as many times as they like without having to worry about looking embarrassed or reluctant to ask the teacher to play the recordings again. This aids in reinforcing listening skills and provides difficult students with greater assistance with listening comprehension.

Considering the learners' evaluation of class time, the current research's finding indicated that the students highly appreciate the use of the time they spent in class. Particularly, the students enjoyed working with their peers, had extra time in class for practice, and felt more comfortable asking questions to get answers in class. This finding was supported by Think (2021) suggesting that the students could save a significant amount of class time to learn the theories but instead applied what they learned at home to their practices or participated in meaningful activities. Regarding the interaction among students in face-to-face lessons, the mean score of 3.89 from the questionnaire data suggested that the students highly valued the class time used to collaborate with their classmates. This goes along with El Sakka's (2016) study indicating that the Flipped Classroom model gives students more time for collaboration with their peers, which can be a tremendous learning opportunity for them.

The final aspect of the challenges that the students faced with the Flipped Classroom model also received positive feedback. Specifically, the participants found the teacher's instructions on Flipped Classroom to be sufficiently clear, and they felt confident in their technological abilities to study with them. When some students completed online activities at home, technical issues were still viewed as a challenge by some of them. Their Internet connection or the Google Classroom platform's ability to broadcast videos may be to blame for this problem. Khoiriyah (2021), and Ansori and Nafi (2018) pointed out the same idea that the accessibility of lessons outside of the classroom which relies on computer and internet connectivity is a major problem in the adoption of the Flipped Classroom model.

VI. CONCLUSION

The current study has proved the positive attitudes of the students toward the Flipped Classroom approach. Thanks to the results of the present study, the researcher is able to prove his hypotheses and will definitely know how to enhance the teaching and learning listening in her own classes. Furthermore, with the desire of sharing and inspiring, several valuable suggestions were made to the teachers when implementing the model into their teaching. First, prior to the beginning of the course, recorded lecture videos handouts, and self-assessment

quizzes should be prepared in advance. Secondly, the researcher believes that if different types of activities are provided during the class, the knowledge from the previewing materials could be applied more effectively and also create a more engaging learning environment which, as a result, foster learners learning motivations. The third implication is that the teachers with the intent to integrate the Flipped Classroom model should be well aware of the learning purposes, characteristics of the Flipped Classroom model, and their computer literacy. Another recommendation is when implementing a flipped classroom, teacher collaboration is crucial. Finding or creating appropriate lesson videos can take some time, which could increase teachers' workloads. Finally, there are other available online learning platforms that could be employed to better integrate the Flipped Classroom model into teaching. Given the fact that each learning platform provides with different learning tools, features and affordances, different teachers teaching different courses could use different platforms or a combination of them to better facilitate their student's learning.

About the Authors

Nguyen Trung Kien is a teacher of English at FPT University in Can Tho, Vietnam. He completed a bachelor's degree of English Studies in 2019. In 2022, he earned his Master's degree at the Can Tho University on Principles and Methods in English Language Education. His research interests include ICT in language education and professional development.

Nguyen Thi Phuong Hong, has been an English teacher at Can Tho University since 1995. In 2006, she earned her Master's degree at the Massachusetts University, Boston, USA under the Fulbright scholarship program granted by the US Government. Her master's thesis is called American Multiculturalism: Contact and Conflict between Ethnic Groups (A Curriculum Project). In 2013, she earned her doctoral degree on Applied Linguistics and TEFL at the Groningen University, Netherlands, under a TRIG scholarship granted by the Vietnamese Government. Her doctoral thesis is called A Dynamic Usage-based Approach to Second Language Teaching. Her research interests include foreign language teaching and learning methods and emotional factors affecting foreign language learning.

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