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The Effect of a Flipping Classroom on Writing Skill in English as a Foreign Language and Students' Attitude Towards Flipping

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This study aimed at investigating the effect of a flipping classroom on writing skill in English as a foreign language and students' attitude towards flipping. The study sample consisted of 60 students at Qassim University and was divided into two groups: 30 students for the experimental group and 30 students for the control group. The instruments of the study are an EFL writing test and a questionnaire to measure students' attitude towards flipping. Students in both the experimental and the control group were pre-tested using the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) writing test. Then, the questionnaire was pre applied for the experimental group only before the experiment. After that the experimental group was taught using flipping while the control group was taught using the traditional method. Finally, students in both groups were post-tested using the EFL writing test while the questionnaire was post applied for the experimental group only. Results of the study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test of EFL writing. Second, there was statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre and post application of the questionnaire of the experimental group in favor of the post application. This difference can be attributed to using flipping.

Keywords: flipping classroom, writing skill, English as a foreign language, students' attitudes

Introduction

Writing is a complex skill. Students in English as a foreign language context will need English writing skills ranging from a simple paragraph and summary skills to the ability to write essays and professional articles. As students enter the workforce, they will be asked to convey ideas and information in a clear manner. If students' writing skill is developed, it will allow the students to graduate with a skill that will benefit for life (Albert-Margan, Hessler, & Konrad, 2007). In fact, good EFL writing, as Lee (2003) states, is a key concern for teachers, researchers, textbook writers, and program designers in the domain of foreign language teaching.

It has been found that writing is one of the most difficult language skills to master (Kurk & Atay, 2007). Alsamadani (2010) indicated that writing is a challenging and difficult process as it includes multiple skills such as identification of the thesis statement, writing supporting details, reviewing, and editing (p. 55). In the same way, Abu-Rass (2001) added that writing is a difficult skill for native and nonnative speakers alike as students should make balance between multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics.

To overcome the difficulties of writing, flipping would be used in this study. Many researchers in the field of English language teaching try to make learning student-centered instead of teacher-centered learning.

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English language teachers have a duty to help students to obtain the skills that they need to flourish in this environment. Student-centered classrooms that value communication (through communicative language teaching) and incorporate Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), pair and group work, decision-making opportunities, and independent learning are necessary if students are to obtain the skills that they need to survive professionally.

Student-centered learning environment is a suitable environment for reinforcing social and virtual mobility in terms of both physical and hyper-real contexts; a school or a classroom is not the only place for students to learn something. Accordingly, today's English practitioners ought to take into account learner's meaningful engagement both inside and outside the classroom to achieve good learning outcomes by creating more learner-centered environment (Brown, 2007). In order to make the educational environment of student-centered, some researches advocate flipping teaching in which the student self-studies lesson contents at home through videos, pods, books, website, or blogs while class hours are used to do the homework or assignments to reinforce his or her understanding of important concepts or knowledge (Bretzmann, 2013). Such a reverse format of teaching and learning is known to be initiated, thus, made popular by Bergmann and Sams, who taught chemistry classes at one of the high schools in the US in 2007 (Flipped Learning Network, 2013).

The flipping classroom meets the needs of students of the 21st century by allowing students to hone the 4Cs: Students can use critical thinking and problem solving as they tackle the group projects and presentations assigned to them; they can communicate and collaborate during the pair and group work that they undertake in class; and they can be creative and innovative when using technology through the new software and websites that the teacher introduces for independent learning activities assigned both in and out of the classroom. Students complete homework assignments by further investigating issues by themselves, encouraging autonomy and giving them responsibility for their own learning—a skill that they will need after graduation from university as they move into their careers (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Hughes, 2012).

Flipping the classroom involves much more than adding technology and out-of-class video activities to the lessons; it requires both teachers and students to "flip" the way they fundamentally view education. Trends in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) have continually been moving towards improving students' oral and written language abilities—shifting away from translation and moving towards delivering vast amounts of "comprehensible input", to finally making language classrooms more communicative with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) are 21st century educational techniques used to improve language learning, involving students in authentic tasks that they use in their daily lives. Teachers have to thus equip themselves with various computer skills in order to stay updated in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and to meet the needs of today's generation of learners. The flipped model of learning takes CALL and TELL one step further—shifting the physical location of the classroom to anywhere an Internet or Wi-Fi connection exists, be it a café, a library, a bus, or even a beach. The flipped model thus alters the concept of the walled classroom and creates a boundless classroom—an idea which is in line with 21st century learning (ATC21S, 2012) and which mixes constructivist theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) with behaviorist principles of teaching and learning.

Blended Learning, Constructivism, and Independent Learning

Blended Learning (BL) is a term that has been in use in the field of language learning for the past 20 years.

It is used to describe learning that combines online learning and face-to-face (F2F) interaction between learners and instructors. To begin with, it is essential to draw a difference between BL and online learning. Online Learning or e-learning also means distance learning, which necessitates Internet connectivity and Information and Communication Technology Skills. Garrison and Anderson (2003) advocate blended learning as a powerful asynchronous teaching strategy. Drawing on the work of Oliver and Trigwell (2005) define BL as "the integrated combination of traditional learning with web-based online approaches". Online learning material can be delivered through educational technology tools involving synchronous and asynchronous mediums. Virtual Learning Environments may be synchronous tools or what Alonso, Lopez, Manrique, and Vines (2005) call "Live Learning". They involve instant messaging, video conferencing, or discussions boards where learners collaborate, asking for and sharing information, but are not quite autonomous in their learning. Asynchronous tools however require more autonomy from learners who actively seek their learning. In BL, synchronous and asynchronous tools may be combined or used separately depending on the designer's choice.

An interesting discussion of BL is the one describing it as a combination of methodologies including the constructivist, behaviorist, and cognitivist. In this definition, elements of the Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approaches are found to fit in a BL instructional program (Sharma, 2010). In a knowledge-based, technology driven society, learners are no longer considered the passive recipients of information. Instead, they are more potentially enabled to progress, be more actively engaged, motivated, autonomous, and independent. Learner autonomy is a term widely used to describe independent, lifelong learning, which is an essential skill in the current and modern lifestyle.

Little (1995, 2000) and Green (2000) note that this ability is not innate; it must be acquired either through "natural" means or through formal, systematic, and deliberate learning. The notion of learner autonomy was introduced by the CRAPEL, the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues at the University of Nancy in France in the 1970s to refer to individualized and lifelong learning. Drawing on Nunan (1999) and Zohrabi (2011), language learning is viewed as learner-centered where learners are helped "to gain linguistic and communicative skills in order to carry out real-world tasks" (p. 34). A large body of research indicates that through BL, learners are more reachable and instructors are able to address the different individual's learning needs. BL allows more individualization and differentiation of instruction as the learning is more personalized, thus improving the adeptness of language learners. Learner autonomy is promoted through BL where learning is "genuinely in the hands of the learner" (Smith, 2008, p. 50).

Research in the Flipped Classroom Instruction (FCI) Educational Practice

Brief History of FCI

In the past, initial steps of the learning process through direct instruction involved going over notes in a book before class, but due to the advent and availability of technological tools for today's learners, the "Digital Natives", as Prensky (2001) calls them, the learning material can be provided before class time through intentional content in direct instruction. The Flipped Classroom Instruction is seen as an alternative to direct instruction. In fact, the FCI can be traced back to 1995 when an instructor at Cedarville University noted that learners should have the PowerPoint he was using in class available to them to view before class.

Perhaps two of the most prominent figures when talking about FCI are Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams. In 2007, both Bergman and Sams were faced with a dilemma of how to address needs of secondary students in their science classes who were continuously absent from school, and so they decided to create

videos of their class lectures to deliver the instructional material to absent students. To their astonishment, students who were not absent from class watched the videos, too, aiming to reinforce and review key concepts. The Inverted Classroom, another term for Flipped Instruction, can be traced back to centuries when students in business and law schools were given assignments to complete outside class in preparation of an in-class discussion. The Flipped Classroom is, however, the term more commonly used currently in the K-12 communities (Talbert, 2012).

Principles of the FCI and Active Learning

The Flipped Classroom Instruction implies a reversal of the normal class set up and the switch between class instruction and homework. What happens through a FCI approach is that students acquire the basic information outside of class, constructing their learning, enjoying the freedom of researching online for further learning. They "pause to reflect on what is being said, rewind to hear it again, listen to as much or as little of the lecture as their schedules permit, and view the lecture on a mobile device rather than in a fixed location" (Talbert, 2012, p. 101). Conversely, in class, students focus on internalizing the material with the help of their peers and instructor who support their decisions while they are working on highly cognitive tasks which they were expected to complete by themselves under "traditional" class teaching structure.

Flipping classroom instruction has many benefits: It allows differentiated instruction to help students overcome language-learning obstacles. The FCI provides learners with opportunities to learn by doing since their learning is more personalized. Flipping the classroom creates the potential for active, engaged, student-centered learning, peer interactions, and personalized instruction (Pearson, 2013). By assigning the videos to be watched as homework, the teacher aims to situate the content of the writing lesson in the learners' world. Active learning is generally defined as one that engages students in the learning process, where learners are actively and extensively involved in activities and are responsible for and have ownership over their learning. Young learners are more likely to be motivated by their interest in an engaging task, which is in this case, the instructional video. The video is likely to engage learners by involving all of their senses while providing opportunities.

The principles of the FCI can be summarized as having a situation where "teachers shift direct learning out of the large group learning space and move it into the individual learning space, with the help of one of several technologies" (Pearson, 2013, p. 40). The used technologies seem perfectly consistent with Communicative Language Teaching Methods since they emphasize learning by doing, which also solves the Task-Based Language Teaching Approaches where learners respond to sets of tasks depending on their diverse abilities.

Previous Studies of Flipping in English as a Foreign Class

Sung (2015) looks into a flipped English content-based class where 12 participating college students were enrolled and completed all the course requirements in an elective course. Before each class, the students were guided to preview lesson materials such as readings and videos and to engage in diverse online activities on an LMS flat form. Then, they did collaborative class activities such as sharing their Thought Papers, discussing the questions on weekly readings developed online, and doing a final project of designing an evaluation plan. The results of the analysis of both informal and formal course evaluations and student work showed that they viewed flipped learning positively despite initial difficulties of adjusting themselves to it. They also viewed that flipped teaching can be a good momentum for change in current English language teaching.

Webb, Doman, and Pusey (2014) conducted an experiment with intermediate level EFL classes at a university in Macau, China. Data from observations and surveys revealed that initially the flipped model did not match learner expectations of teacher roles in the classroom. However, at the end of the 15-week course, students in the experimental classes requested additional flipped materials and appeared more comfortable with the model. Additional findings from teaching journals uncovered that three out of the four teachers recommend the flipped approach for promoting creativity and opportunities for higher order learning in the classroom. The journals also indicated some skepticism among teachers in regards to applying the flipped concept to language instruction and struggles with student engagement with the materials.

Engin (2014) describes a project that aimed to leverage the students' interest and experience of technology and multimodal environments to develop their academic writing skills and second language learning. Students were expected to follow a model, research a topic, and craft a digital video tutorial on an aspect of academic writing which would form part of the already established flipped classroom model. Feedback from students suggests that there was tension between students as producers, and students as consumers. Student-created videos promoted second language learning through research, simplification, explanation, and encouraged more focus on form, and promoted accuracy in English. However, it was also noted that students prefer a teacher explanation than a peer explanation and there were concerns over the "trustworthiness" of a peer produced video tutorial.

Mireille (2014) aims to examine the impact of using a Flipped Classroom Instructional Method on the writing performance of the twelfth grade Emirati female students and identify female students' perception of the Flipped Instruction in an ESL writing setting. For this purpose, a 15-week teaching program was designed to cover the main IELTS Tasks 1 and 2 writing objectives. The program consisted of instructional videos and differentiated class tasks that were used with only one group of students while the other group studied the teaching material in a similarly learner-centered class. Both groups completed a pretest and post-test to answer the inquiry of the study. Findings revealed statistically significant differences between the mean scores in favor of the students in the experimental group. This improvement in the writing performance is attributable to the Flipped Instruction method of teaching. Students' attitudes towards the Flipped Instruction proved to be equally favorable.

Butt (2014) investigated the flipped classroom in his final-year actuarial course in Australia. By giving a two-part questionnaire to his students, he found that students perceive that they learn the most from performing an activity and that they prefer individual study over lectures, tutorials, and group study. By comparing students attitudes at the beginning of the semester and then again at the end, Butt found that students who originally viewed the flipped classroom unfavorably at the beginning of the course began to change the opinions about this by the end of the class.

Baranovic (2013) examined the impact of flipping on his first-year composition course at a university in the United States. By creating multimedia lecture videos, he eliminated the need for traditional lectures and replaced these with creative writing-style workshops. To facilitate the workshop, his classroom became a circular, communal space of socially constructed standards, encouraging a collaborative recursive writing process and stimulating creative thinking in his students. Results showed that the course benefitted students of all writing levels, in particular non-native English speakers. Students are invested heavily in the workshop and in each others' writing, and their writing exceeded the standards set by the university.

Wang and Zhang (2013) analyzed data gathered from four learners in their English for Educational Technology class using triangulation based on questionnaires, interviews and observations, and found

significant improvements in their listening, translation and writing skills. They also found improvement in their speaking, as measured by more active group discussion and participation in class in English and the acquirement of more difficult vocabulary words.

Li (2013) also described her flipped classroom and painted a picture of her learners before and after the flip, as the classroom changed from being teacher-centered to becoming more learner centered. She found that the flip helped in many ways: by allowing the teacher to individualize instruction, allowing students more opportunities to engage in the four skills, creating students who are more self-disciplined to study, making students more active in class, not wasting students' time on note-taking in class, and reducing teacher pressure to create materials as they can share online. As a result, Li suggested that the flipped classroom be considered as a viable teaching technique in China.

In conclusion, data from empirical studies is hardly available for the flipped classroom as of yet. The term has become popular in educational circles, but is seems that few teachers have embraced the concept enough to do empirical studies on the topic. Therefore, the current study offers an attempt to help fill the void in the current lack of research into the flipped classroom, particularly the ESL/EFL flipped classroom.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at:

(1) Measuring the effect of flipping classroom on writing skill in English as a foreign language: ideas and content, organization, voice, and style;

(2) Measuring students' attitude towards flipping.

Questions of the Study

This current study attempted to answer the following questions:

(1) What is the effect of a flipping classroom on writing skills in English as a foreign language?

(2) Is there a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest scores on the development of the four specific writing skills: ideas and content, organization, voice, and style?

(3) What is the effect of flipping on students' attitude towards it?

To answer these questions, the mean scores of the experimental and the control group in an EFL pre and post writing test and the questionnaire were compared using SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) version 20. In addition, the mean scores of the rubric were compared.

Limitations

The limitation was that the study was conducted with only one section of 60 female students who were divided into 30 as an experimental group and 30 as a control group. Another additional boundary was the running of the study in the second semester of 2015 in one university in Saudi Arabia with undergraduate female students.

Methodology

Participants

The flipped classroom in this study is in a blended format, which means that the students were required to do both online and offline learning activities each week. This study was conducted in the College of Science

and Arts in a female branch of Qassim University with a population of 1,200 students in Saudi Arabia. English undergraduate students are studying writing skills in the eight levels of their study in the university. They started at a basic writing level and move to writing a five-paragraph essay. The college uses high quality writing textbooks from Oxford University Press.[1] At the time of the study, there were three English Ph.D. and M.A. holders comprising the college who taught writing in the college. In this quantitative, quasi-experimental study, one English writing class (level four) was chosen randomly as an experimental group to write essays via flipping for a period of three months. Another English writing class (level four) was chosen to be a control group which study writing in a traditional way.

Instruments of the Study and Materials

An EFL writing test and a questionnaire to measure the students' attitude towards flipping were designed by the researcher (see Appendix A and B). The researcher designed a rubric to correct the EFL writing test and students' essays. Oklt Alsqoor College is considered as an ideal selection for the flipped environment as the college's infrastructure allows for online blended learning. The college is equipped with a Learning Management System (LMS), "PLATO", which is accessible to all students. Each student is in possession of a Mac Book Pro Laptop that is provided from the college. Students are part of the net-generation with excellent command of online learning tools. Oklt Alsqoor college of Science and Arts offers the most convenient conditions for both learners and teachers to undertake a blended learning experience, particularly, through flipped instruction.

Reliability and Validity of the EFL Writing Test

Since two teachers assessed the EFL writing test, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient testing for inter-rater reliability was used to assess the consistency of the scores of the two assessors.

Questionnaire

This questionnaire measures the students' attitude towards flipping and whether flipping can improve writing skills or not. The questionnaire is consisted of 26 items and each item has a five-point—Likert format: (5) Strongly Agree (SA), (4) Agree (A), (3) Neutral (N), (2) Disagree (D), and (1) Strongly Disagree (SD). Responses from the subjects of the experimental group were collected online through the Google Docs analysis. The questionnaire was made available for students' participation for a period of two days, after which students were no longer able to use the link provided. The data was downloaded on an excel sheet, which was then computed through the SPSS version 20 for Windows. The questionnaire served as a tool to collect information and enrich the study with students' perceptions of the FCI. In order to preserve face validity, the items on the questionnaire were given to two experienced researchers to check for lack of ambiguity. For content validity, the questions were revised to avoid misleading statements and to ensure they are psychologically designed to meet the requirements of the study. The questions were run on the Cronbach Scale on SPSS 20 to measure internal consistency and reliability.

Procedures of the Study

In conducting this study, the following procedures were followed:

The researcher prepared the educational videos and the instructional writing screen tasks which are based on

[1] Oshima, Alice et al., *Writing Academic English* (4th ed.). Longman, 2006.

the course "Writing Academic English" for the English class. They were uploaded onto the PLATO LMS for students in the experimental group to access or emailed to them prior to the lessons. The I pad application used to create screencasts was the "Explain Everything", which allowed annotation and sound recording over a PowerPoint presentation. The creation of screencasts required much editing. The researcher did the following steps for every screencast:

(1) Create an instructional PowerPoint presentation;

(2) Open it in "Explain Everything" Application;

(3) Prepare the spoken annotations;

(4) Record the voice over the interactive video;

(5) Upload the created video onto the PLATO LMS for the experimental group's access or email it as needed.

The use of this application was consistent with the plane to establish flipped and individualized instruction. Students undertaking the experiment were expected to view the video prior to the class using all the interactivity that the designed video offered. This study consisted of 15 writing packages (videos). They helped the students in the experimental group learn concepts at their own pace in a more differentiated manner. Videos were complimented with recommended online activities and further reading and practice. The writing lessons offered a greater practice time in class, and the lesson tasks allowed more focus, strategies for independent learning and apprenticeship for students in the experimental group.

The researcher explained to students how the experiment would proceed and the reasons for following the method of flipping. Students should consider the assigned video or PPT as their homework to come to class ready with the information needed to free more practice in class time. Expectations from students were described in depth, but required around two weeks from proper class implementation. This was due to students' initial resistance in the experimental group to change in the instructional delivery method.

Throughout the duration of the study, the control group received traditional instruction in class in a student-centered learning environment but with the same activities and time for scaffolding tasks for students except that the responses to the writing prompts were completed at home. In contrast, the experimental group was learning by doing as the content of their lesson was given to them in advance to provide them with opportunities to learn at their own pace and be more involved in class activities. The method was different.

The experiment began in January 2015 and continued for about three months. The EFL prewriting test and the questionnaire were administered to the control and the experimental groups on 26th of January, 2015. Every week, students in the experimental group were given a video PowerPoint to watch before the next class. The videos were designed to help students write an essay each week. After few weeks, students get accustomed to the flipped method and were involved in the class activities. Class activities were task-based and scaffold depending on students' learning abilities. At the end of the experiment, the post EFL writing test was administered to the control and the experimental group on April 26 and the questionnaire was post applied to the experimental group in the same day.

Results

Table 1

Results of the T-test of the Experimental and the Control Group in the Post-writing Test

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	T-value	df	Sig.
Experimental	30	20	1.84	24.8	29	Sig.
Control	30	11.3	1		29	

Table 1 shows that there is statistically significant difference at 0.05 between the mean scores of the experimental group (X1 = 20) and the control group (X2 = 11.3) in the post-test of writing in favor of the experimental group as indicated by T-value (24.8). This difference may be attributed to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in flipping.

Table 2

Results of the T-test of the Experimental Group in the Pre and the Post-writing Test

Test	N	Mean	S.D.	T-value	df	Sig.
Pre	30	9.47	1.0	-84.7	29	Sig.
Post	30	20	1.34		29	

Table 2 indicates that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test (X1 = 9.47) and post-test (X2 = 20) of the experimental group students in favor of the post-test. Hence, such difference may be due to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in flipping.

Table 3

Results of T-test of the Posttest of the Experimental and the Control Group in EFL Writing Sub-skills

Writing sub-skills	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	T-value	df	Sig.
(1) Ideas and content	Experimental	30	3.60	0.498	15.92**	59	Sig.
	Control	30	3	5.86		59	
(2) Organization	Experimental	30	3.47	0.517	17.77**	59	Sig.
	Control	30	3	6.16		59	
(3) Style	Experimental	30	7.33	0.476	31.72**	59	Sig.
	Control	30	3	9.46		59	
(4) Voice	Experimental	30	7.40	0.563	24.44**	59	Sig.
	Control	30	3	10.8		59	

The above Table 3 shows that there is statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental and the control group students in post-test of all sub-skills of EFL writing in favor of the experimental group as T-value for independent sample is between 14.00 and 36.33 and proved to be significant at 0.05 (one-tailed) for all sub-skills: ideas and content, organization, voice, and style. This difference between the experimental and the control group students can be attributed to using flipping.

Table 4

Results of the T-test of the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group in Overall Writing Sub-skills

Writing sub-skills	Test	N	Mean	S.D.	T-value	df	Sig.
(1) Ideas and content	Pre	30	2	6.19	16.98**	59	Sig.
	Post	30	5	1.87		59	
(2) Organization	Pre	30	3	7.67	19.41**	59	Sig.
	Post	30	5	8.19		59	
(3) Style	Pre	30	3	7.67	30.06**	59	Sig.
	Post	30	5	8.96		59	
(4) Voice	Pre	30	2	14.38	23.48**	59	Sig.
	Post	30	5	16		59	

Table 4 shows that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group students in post-test of all skills of EFL writing in favor of the experimental group as T-value for paired sample is between 9.26 and 18.63 which proved to be significant at 0.05 (one-tailed) for all skills: ideas and content, organization, voice, and style. These differences between the

mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the experimental group students can be attributed to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in flipping.

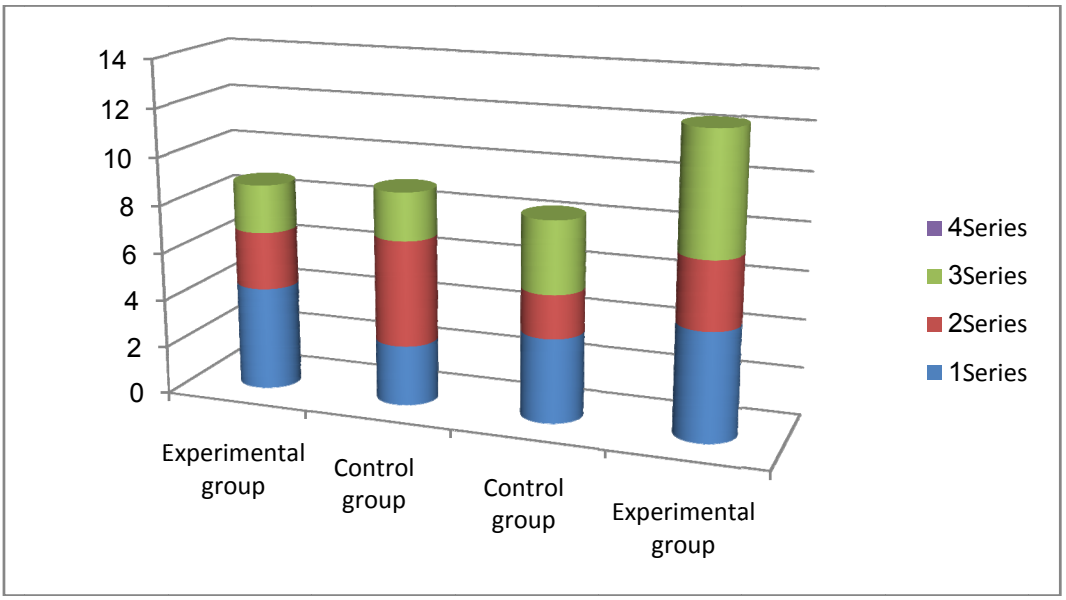

Figure 1. The results of the T-test of the experimental and the control group in the post-writing test.

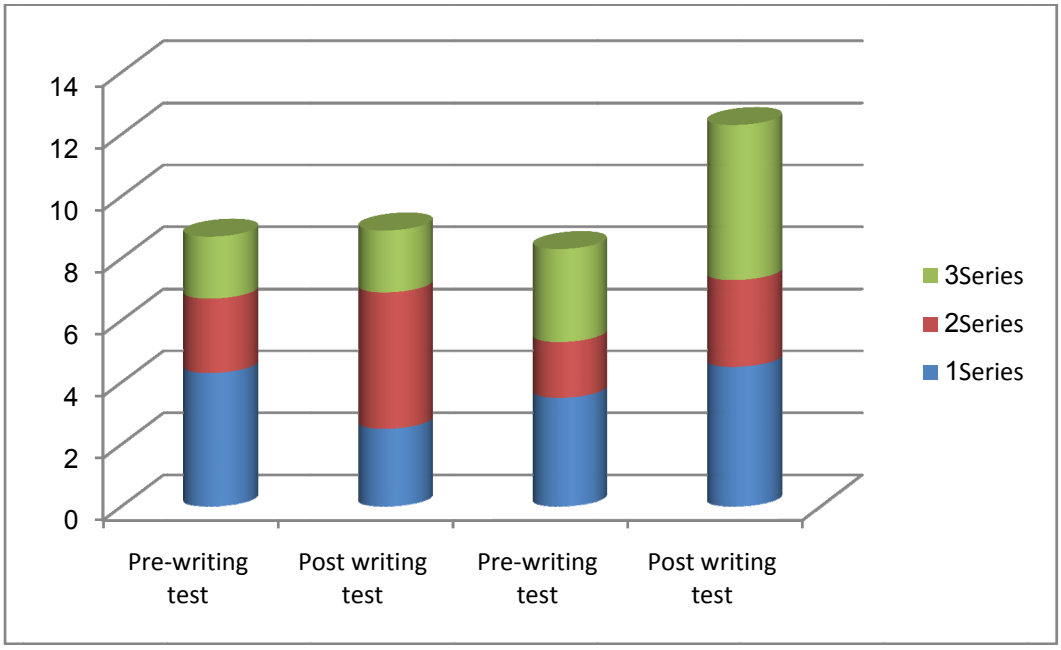

Figure 2. The results of the T-test of the experimental group in the pre and the post writing test.

Table 5

Results of the T-test of the Experimental Group in the Pre and the Post Application of the Questionnaire

Experimental	N	Mean	S.D.	T-value	df	Sig.
Pre application	30	60	3.40	70.7	29	Sig.
Post application	30	122	4.80		29	

Table 5 shows that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre and post application of the experimental group in favor of the post application as T-value for paired sample is between 70.7 which proved to be significant at 0.05 (one-tailed). This difference can be attributed to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in flipping.

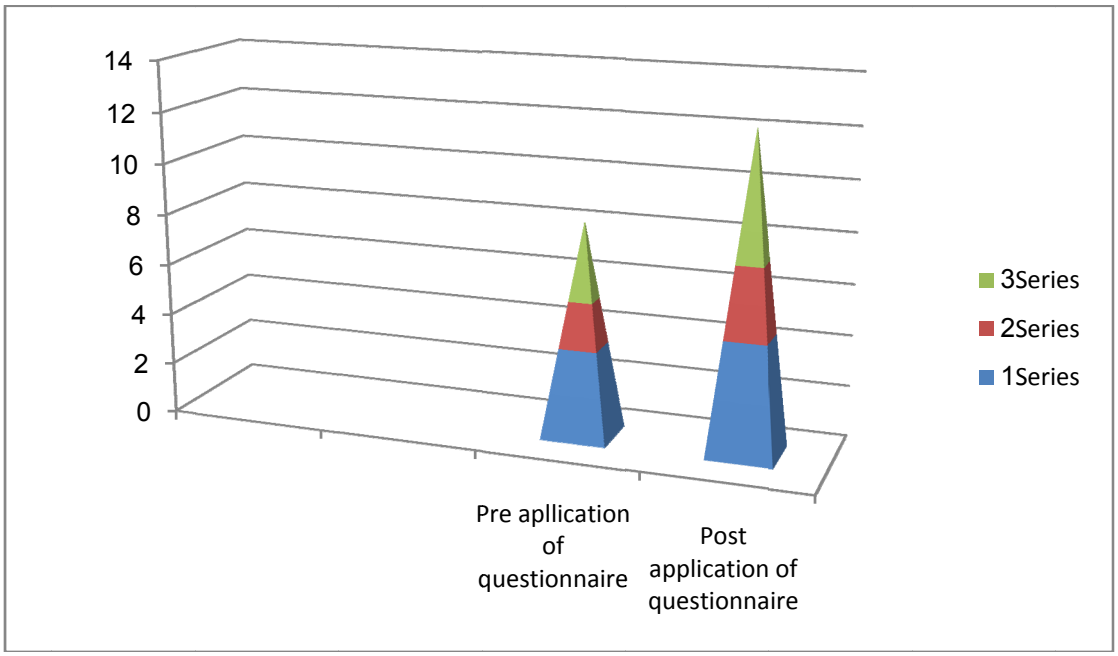

Figure 3. The results of the T-test of the pre and post application of the experimental group questionnaire towards flipping instruction.

Discussion

This is a study of the effect of a flipping classroom on writing skill in English as a foreign language and students' attitude towards flipping.

The three major questions in this study were analyzed using pretest and posttest outcomes to examine students' writing skills: ideas and content, organization, voice and style, and students' attitude towards flipping. When looking at the treatment of flipping, the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post writing test. This improvement in the experimental group writing may be attributed to using flipping. Also, the experimental group showed improvement in their writing skills: ideas and content, organization, voice, and style. This indicated that flipping can have a positive effect on improving students' writing skills. Since only 22% of undergraduate university write at or above the proficient level (Magrath, 2003), the results of this study are important to help university English instructors find methods to assist students in improving writing skills that are needed later on in life. This would indicate that teachers need to use any means available to develop this skill. Since flipping is an available tool, teachers should use this tool to improve writing skills that will help the students as they get a job.

Flipped learning has a positive effect on student writing abilities. Flipped learning can provide the students with an opportunity to learn in a more differentiated fashion rather than linear and didactic (Butt, 2014; Tune, Sturek, & Basile, 2013; Willey & Gardner, 2013). Students noted several times that they appreciated the ability to digest the content of their essays and writing exercises when they deemed necessary, so long as it was done

before the next class period. Though the majority of students completed the required outside content on a fairly regular basis, there was always a small portion that did not (Davies, Dean, & Ball, 2013; Gaughan, 2014; Murphree, 2014; Willey & Gardner, 2013).

The results of the study are also consistent with the constructivist theories of learning. Students in the experimental group constructed their long-term learning by applying inductive learning strategies to improve their writing skills in opposition with Chomsky's simplified notion of language learning as an unconscious process. Their learning occurred as a result of critically analyzing key concepts at their own pace in an individualized setting such as their homes. In this fashion, they improved their English writing proficiency by consciously following taught strategies. Furthermore, the findings of the study also support the impact of the method of instruction on students' achievement in writing through the form-focused instruction and input-based instruction (Ellis, 1997; VanPatten, 1994, as cited in Robinson, 2001). Students in the experimental group emphasized the input-based instruction, which helped them to consciously notice the language features.

In terms of student engagement, flipped learning received the most positive remarks from students in the qualitative surveys, especially when addressing the use of class time. Students perceived the use of classroom activities that activated higher-order thinking to be able to write different types of essays and perform their writing tasks (Davies, Dean, & Ball, 2013; Lemmer, 2013; Murphree, 2014; Willey & Gardner, 2013; Wilson, 2013). Additionally, the environment afforded students to remain at higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy for longer periods of time (Enfield, 2013). The longer students remain in the higher levels of thinking and problem solving, the more they feel engaged with their writing tasks, and the perceived quality of the learning is greater as they have more and more time to brainstorm their minds and jot down their ideas at their own pace (Wilson, 2013). In addition, it was clear that a flipped learning environment better prepares students for the written work environment.

Bruce, Hughes, and Somerville (2012) indicated that Informed Learning was a key piece to students feeling comfortable with how to learn. How students took the written tasks that is given to them, made sense of it, and learned from it in authentic ways, is what gave students confidence in learning beyond the classroom (Lemmer, 2013). This idea was the premise of every flipped learning environment tested in this review.

The results of the study are consistent with active learning. Flipped learning empowered students through more active learning (Butt, 2014; Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000; Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2014). Rather than having the instructor's interpretation of the material delivered explicitly during class time where students passively took notes and possibly asked questions, the students were held more accountable for the front-loading of their writing content. Students can revise content outside the class space and synthesize the material at their own pace. By assigning the videos to be watched as homework, the teacher aims to situate the content of the writing lesson in the learners' world. Active learning is generally defined as one that engages students in the learning process, where learners are actively and extensively involved in activities and are responsible for and have ownership over their learning. This more active role is difficult for some students to adjust to, but it was evident that they do prefer it, especially looking at the percentage of students who prefer a flipped environment to a traditional one (Enfield, 2013; Pearson Education Inc., 2013; Tune, Sturek, & Basile, 2013).

The findings could also be interpreted as the benefits of combining different teaching methods, which are a form of blended learning and a set of rich class tasks that are differentiated depending on students' personal and diverse abilities. These tasks represented individualized in-class learning plans that engaged students in an

inquiry that led them to reach the same learning outcome in a differentiated, more personalized manner. All in all, students' performance showed a better understanding, a higher knowledge, and improved writing skills. The FCI and the corresponding class activities were carefully designed to help learners to clearly express their ideas and logically organize them in an interesting and correct way. Consequently, the FCI could be openly credited to the writing progress. The rich input through the videos and the following classroom interaction and individualized tasks promoted better skills and enhanced the written productions on the different levels of rhetoric and linguistic level of the language. Students attentively noticed the new linguistic concepts presented in the videos. They were given ample opportunities in the task-based activities to analyze information, focus on the output production, and be engaged in their writing. Hence, adjusting the teaching method to include well-defined writing knowledge enhanced students' awareness of good writing strategies. The FCI approach holds that students have more time to write in class, apply their learning, and receive immediate feedback and prompting from the teacher who assists them through their individualized tasks to ensure a production that reflects improved content, organization, cohesion, sentence structure, and lexical conventions

In addition, taking into account data from students' responses on the questionnaire, it was found that a considerable number of students felt more motivated and independent because of the Flipped Classroom Instruction. Learner autonomy is best manifested in students through better confidence in their attainment and abilities. This is a feature, which was reported by many students in the experimental group who felt greater confidence to their learning and skills. This, of course, was reflected not only through the questionnaire but also through the improved results, and was found to be consistent with Smith (2008) who views learners in the center of their learning, which is enhanced by Blended Approaches to Learning. Past research (Liu, 2013; Chang, 2005; Kemmer, 2011, 2012) holds that learners today highly appreciate computers and technology, and blended learning in general increases student-centeredness, motivation, autonomy, and writing ability.

Conclusion

Throughout the past years, there has been much emphasis on the importance of using educational technology in the teaching of languages. Starting with Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and moving onwards, there seems to be an improvement in the quality of students' writing. The results of this study indicate that not only did flipping classroom instruction improve students' attainment in writing but also it improved their overall attitudes and beliefs towards the writing skill. Moreover, this teaching method boosted students' motivation and class engagement. Students in the experimental group demonstrated a better writing attainment through the FCI, and found that they became more engaged and responsible of their learning.

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Appendix A: An EFL Writing Test

Choose one of the following topics and write a five-paragraph- essay about it:

Topic one: Making a cake.

Topic: Community service.

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Appendix B: Questionnaire

Students' attitudes towards the Flipped Classroom Instruction:

Dear Students,

Please describe your attitude towards the Flipped Classroom Instruction. Please read the below statements carefully and answer them as truthfully as possible by ticking the right box. Try to answer all the questions given. Please note that all answers are anonymous.

5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Rate your attitude to flipped instruction in an English Writing Class from 5 1 5 4 3 2 1

1. The flipped instruction allows me to prepare for my class in advance.
2. Through the screencasts/videos, I have enough time to acquire the sentence structures.
3. I feel more confident to ask for clarifications after watching the screencasts.
4. I feel more confident about my learning due to the flipped instruction.
5. The flipped instruction made it easier for me to write Task 1 and 2 responses.
6. My writing strategies are better as I have more time to apply the learning in class.
7. I feel I am more in charge of my learning through the flipped instruction.
8. I feel that the flipped instruction has not helped me at all.
9. I understand more when the teacher explains in class.
10. I like to write in class to get instant feedback from my teacher.
11. The quality of my communication skills in English has improved.
12. I felt more engaged in this class than in other classes I have taken.
13. Classroom time was used effectively.
14. If given the choice, I would continue learning English with the flipped classroom model.
15. The flipped classroom model helped me feel more comfortable speaking English during class.
16. I feel confident participating in basic conversations in English.
17. Online resources are helpful in learning English.
18. Online grammar quizzes that allow me to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning English.
19. Knowledge of English grammar is important to my overall learning of English.
20. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my overall learning of English.
21. The best way to learn grammar is to have my teacher lecture on it in class.
22. I prefer watching video lessons at home (such as the annotation video) rather than live teacher instruction in class.
23. I feel that the use of technology is helping me learn in this class.
24. I think the online videos/materials used in my English class so far are effective in helping me learn.
25. My English classroom provides me more opportunity than my other classes to communicate with other students.
26. I like submitting assignments and receiving teacher feedback online through Moodle.