THE USE OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL IN ADVANCED GRAMMAR LESSONS AT AN GIANG UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

Tran Thi Bich Dung[i]
Faculty of Foreign Languages,
An Giang University,
An Giang province,
Vietnam
Vietnam National University,
Ho Chi Minh City,
Vietnam

Abstract:
Grammar knowledge is the basis for effective communication, especially in tertiary grammar instruction. Many studies have pointed out that innovative teaching methods can help enhance students' understanding and engagement in grammar and reshape traditional ones by emphasizing pre-class preparation and active in-class learning. Providing opportunities for greater student engagement and improved proficiency helps the teaching tendency to address the often monotonous nature of grammar instruction. In other words, this approach brings about significant opportunities to improve student involvement and proficiency. This paper, thus, aims to review the impacts of flipped instruction in advanced grammar education for second-year students at An Giang University (AGU). At the same time, the paper mentions the ability to foster active learning, enhance grammatical proficiency, and address challenges identified in prior research.

Keywords: flipping classroom model, advanced grammar, benefits, drawbacks

1. Introduction

Tertiary grammar education plays an important role in forming students' linguistic competence. The importance of grammatical proficiency in learners' achievement has been well-documented in research. Specifically, in 2018, Fikron claimed that grammatical competence is essential for controlling language output and is fundamentally responsible for it. Hence, he advocates for educators to focus on cultivating this foundational skill in students. Similarly, Cuéllar (2013) advised teachers to teach grammar based on contextual writing activities to improve students' linguistic understanding. Thanks to

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[i] Correspondence: email ttbdung@agu.edu.vn

these researchers, strong grammar knowledge is necessary to help facilitate effective written and spoken communication.

Proficiency in grammar is a prerequisite for good communication since it allows students to express themselves clearly both orally and in writing. Nonetheless, grammar instruction typically takes the form of lectures and exercises, where students learn concepts in class and then practice them at home with exercises. Such a learning way helps reduce that boring exercises and lecture-based instruction do not fully engage students and optimize their learning potential.

Similarly, there are two fundamental elements of traditional Vietnamese education. They emphasize memorization and the preservation of teacher authority. With such a common tendency, students of the Faculty for Foreign Languages (FFL), An Giang University (AGU), have historically experienced grammar instruction in that way, which means that previously, traditional grammar instruction often followed a lecture-and-practice model, wherein concepts were introduced in the classroom and later reinforced through plenty of at-home assignments. This approach may suit some learners, but it may fail to attract learners or frequently limit opportunities for active participation and collaboration during lessons. Additionally, advanced grammar lessons require learners to master complex rules and the ability to apply them seamlessly in various contexts. During their second term, first-year students of English often encounter challenges in studying advanced grammar while absorbing basic to more complex linguistic structures. These students may struggle with grasping sophisticated grammatical rules, such as voices, types of sentences, reported speech, phrases, and sentence transformations. On such premise, students are required to have a solid grasp of foundational grammar; however, students may be involved in struggling with the complexity and nuances of applying rules in practice. For example, knowing how to transform clauses into phrases or mastering reported speech can be demanding, as both involve structural shifts and precise rule application. Additionally, some students may feel overburdened by the responsibility to balance grammar correctly and fluently in everyday speech, making learning difficult.

A move toward more student-centered approaches is being encouraged by recent reforms that acknowledge the value of creative teaching strategies for Faculty for Foreign Languages (FFL) students. Consequently, flipped classrooms have emerged as an effective pedagogical model. Promoting pre-class preparation and prioritizing interactive, in-class learning allows educators to create an environment for students to engage actively, practice intensively, and develop confidence in tackling advanced grammar topics. As Le and Nguyen mentioned in their research findings in 2020, the flipped classroom approach, contrary to traditional teaching methods, can meet these changes by bringing about a more engaging and interactive learning environment (as cited in Nguyen, 2021, pp. 151-152).

This review delves into the transformative values of flipped classrooms in grammar education at FFL by exploring the potential of the flipped classroom model to revolutionize the teaching of advanced grammar lessons at FFL, AGU. It additionally

examines how this innovative pedagogical approach supports students' language and grammatical learning and considers possible challenges of this kind of instruction accordingly.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Flipped Classroom Model

Originating from two famous researchers, Bergmann and Sams (2012), the flipped classroom model signifies a significant change in teaching methods. (pp. 14-15). Such methodological change, as Nouri (2016) explained, is that what is usually done in traditional classrooms is flipped or switched with what is typically done by the students out of class (p. 2). Additionally, they assumed that the flipped classroom is an instructional strategy and blended learning model that reverses traditional teaching by delivering content outside the classroom (often online) and utilizing class time for active interaction, meaningful practice, and knowledge application. Transferring instructional content delivery outside the classroom, often via online platforms, allows educators to utilize class time for active learning and student engagement. In the flipped model, the time is completely restructured (Flipped Learning Network, 2014). Students still need to ask questions about the grammar content previously delivered via video. The first few minutes of class then begin with answering these questions. This stage addresses misconceptions before being practised and incorrect application. Most of the time is used for more extensive hands-on activities and/or directed problem-solving time.

During the flipping process, students are exposed to "direct instruction" in the form of moving from the "group learning space" to the "individual" learning space. Additionally, the resulting group area becomes an engaging, dynamic learning environment where the educator guides the students as they apply concepts and engage creatively with the subject matter (FLN, 2014, p. 1; Nguyen, 2021, p. 152). The Four Pillars of F-L-I-PTM represent the four criteria educators must meet to bring out flipped learning. Are listed as follows:
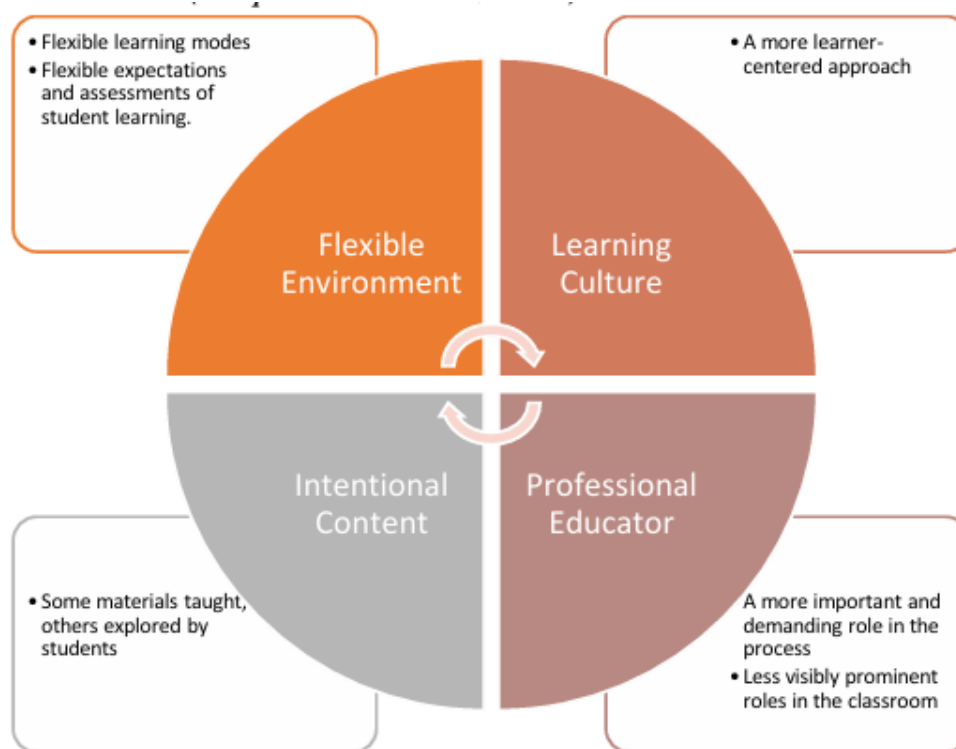
(Nguyen, 2021, p. 152)

2.2 Advantages of Flipped Learning

The flipped classroom model, a transformative and modern teaching approach, offers many benefits for learners and educators. The teaching methodology addresses diversified learning styles in that teachers empower students across varying ability levels, supporting high-achievers in advancing their skills while providing struggling learners with the tools they need to succeed (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, pp. 20-33). Due to this, students can learn at their own speed, promoting independence and a deeper understanding of challenging material. Additionally, pausing, fast-forwarding and rewinding lessons may provoke students' thorough comprehension of complex ideas while actively interacting with the material in a manner that best fits their unique learning preferences. (Nouri, 2016, p. 2).

Furthermore, classroom dynamics will be facilitated by increasing the number and calibre of interactions between peers and teachers. Flipped learning transforms classroom dynamics, enhancing the quality and frequency of interactions between students and teachers and among peers. Teaching strategy making teachers more facilitators than lecturers creates opportunities for individualized instruction and stronger connections with students. Due to that, teachers can identify and address specific challenges learners face and then adapt lessons to meet their needs. Within the flipped framework, interactive and collaborative activities help promote a feeling of community by encouraging mutual support and shared learning experiences. As highlighted by Zainuddin and Halili (2016), they assumed that such environments encourage

engagement, participation, and teamwork. These skills are integral to building a productive and dynamic classroom atmosphere (pp. 314-315).

Additionally, flipped learning has the potential to promote more integration and collaboration. For example, Crouch and Mazur (2001) describe how this approach shifts the focus from passive knowledge transmission to active problem-solving and discussion, which stimulates critical thinking and helps students internalize concepts more effectively (p. 970). However, implementing these changes requires students to be more responsible for learning and motivates them to explore and apply knowledge meaningfully. Setting outside-the-classroom transforms means teachers transform traditional teaching methodologies and equip students with essential communication and teamwork skills.

2.3 Disadvantages of the Flipped Classroom Model

The method's implementation relies heavily on technology, which can offer several challenges for educators. This strategy may hinder student engagement with pre-class information. Additionally, pupils might not be thoroughly equipped for self-directed learning because they lack the drive or discipline. Similarly, teachers have more work to do in order to produce high-quality materials and enjoyable in-class activities. To ensure successful execution, we require innovative solutions, robust support systems, and strategic planning. Strategic planning, strong support networks, and creative solutions are needed to solve these problems and guarantee their successful execution.

To support this, Lo and Hew (2017) stated that one of the most significant barriers to fairness in flipped classrooms is still underprivileged kids' entry to electronics and the internet (p. 5). This discrepancy may result in gaps in participation and readiness, particularly for pupils from underprivileged neighborhoods.

Additionally, although some students may have trouble managing their time or lack the necessary intrinsic desire, the concept depends on students engaging with pre-class material independently. Zhou, Rattanaphinyowanich, and Tosati (2024) highlight that "*students' limited accountability in completing pre-class tasks can compromise the active learning objectives of flipped classrooms*" (p. 24)

3. Applications in Language Learning

3.1 Flipping and Grammar Acquisition

Research indicates that flipped classrooms help enhance grammar and language acquisition. Specifically, in 2015, Hung assumed that students in flipped learning environments improved their language skills, as they could learn at their own pace and engage in contextualized practice (pp.82-83). Similarly, Webb and Doman (2016) highlighted that flipped instruction provides ESL/EFL learners more opportunities to participate actively, making it an effective tool for improving language competencies (pp.40.42).

By providing pre-class materials such as videos and interactive exercises, teachers use flipped learning to engage students with grammar rules and language structures at their own pace. This approach fosters autonomy and deeper understanding. As a result, learners can pause, rewind, and revisit content as needed. Furthermore, flipped classroom in-class activities allow learners to apply knowledge through collaborative tasks, discussions, and problem-solving exercises. Active participation and peer learning are crucial for language acquisition. Social media and digital tools are two beneficial tools to help improve student involvement and feedback. Thanks to that, the learning process is facilitated. In addition to enhancing grammar, this approach fosters critical thinking and communication, two essential elements of language acquisition.

3.2 Recommendations for application of the Flipped classroom model in Advanced grammar instruction

To effectively exploit a flipped classroom instruction in advanced grammar lessons, the following strategies can be employed:

3.2.1 Pre-class activities to help engage students with grammar concepts

Teachers share pre-class videos, PowerPoint files, or podcasts about advanced grammar topics, such as voices, reported speech, phrase-to-clause, or sentence transformation. Then, they give students interactive questions, exercises, and hands-on practice before class or ask students to identify and analyze the grammar used to call for their deeper engagement. Similarly, teachers can ask students to analyze the usage and prepare questions or reflections from a text in the newspaper, excerpts from literature, or academic texts. For instance, teachers can provide pre-class resources like a video lecture that explains key advanced grammar concepts about reported speech. Teachers can exploit platforms like Kahoot or Quizlet to make interactive and enjoyable tasks focusing on converting direct speech to reported speech.

3.2.2 In-class activities that encourage students' understanding, application and collaboration

For this stage, facilitating discussions where students share their observations and questions from the pre-class materials can foster peer-to-peer learning. Similarly, assigning collaborative projects where students create and analyze sentences using advanced grammar, asking them to rewrite a short paragraph using different grammatical structures, or using authentic texts or students' writing to identify and correct advanced grammar mistakes in a collaborative setting.

3.3 Post-class activities

The measures below are exploited to assess and, at the same time, strengthen students' comprehension. For instance, after being equipped with advanced grammar concepts learned in class, students are asked to write essays, stories, or blog posts, encouraging creativity. Next, online quizzes and exercises are powerful self-evaluated devices to

measure learners' understanding and track their progress. Besides, teachers can use online platforms like Padlet or a class forum for students to reflect on their learning, pose questions, and discuss their challenges with peers.

Stages of pre-class preparation, interactive in-class activities, and post-class reflection help students engage deeply with advanced grammar topics and build their skills effectively.

4. Conclusion

Flipped teaching tendency encourages a significant shift in pedagogical practices. The flipped classroom models involve a significant shift in teaching practices. Due to that, students and educators benefit from this transformative process. This kind of shifting allows students at FFL to deepen their understanding of advanced grammar in a collaborative and engaging environment. The model also encourages educators to provide focused feedback and foster active involvement. This contributes to building the gaps often left by conventional teaching methods. However, the process of implementation also forces teachers and students, including students' lack of self-discipline, unequal access to technology, and increased workload for teachers who must prepare engaging resources. Generally, with meaningful in-class activities for learners of various levels, teachers' teaching tendency need to be carefully planned and supported. Overcoming these obstacles through equal access to resources, engaging content, and collaborative activities can help flipped learning succeed.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)
Tran Thi Bich Dung is a lecturer at An Giang University, VNU-HCM. She earned a Master's Degree from HCM Open University. She is especially interested in Courses related to Service Learning, Writing, Pragmatics and Syntax, Research Methodology, which are part of her regular teaching duties.

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