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The Impact of Electronic Flipped Classroom Instruction on Students` Attitudes towards Learning Vocabulary

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Abstract:

This study examines the effect of the electronic flipped classroom instruction (EFCI) on students` attitudes toward learning vocabulary. To this end, the sample consisted of 38 EFL female tenth grade students who were selected purposefully in UNRWA schools in South Amman Area. The study uses a questionnaire and an interview to collect the data which is analyzed using means and standard deviations, the analysis revealed that students had positive attitudes towards learning with the electronic flipped classroom. Several pedagogical implications and recommendations are put forth.

Key Words: EFL; flipped classroom; vocabulary learning; attitudes.

تأثير التدريس بالصف المقلوب الالكتروني على اتجاهات الطلبة نحو تعلم المفردات**رهام محمد السقال*****ملخص:**

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى الكشف عن تأثيرالتدريس بالفصول المقلوبة الالكترونية في اتجاهات الطلبة في تعلم المفردات. تحقيقاً لهذه الغاية، تكونت العينة من 38 طالبة اختيرت بطريقة قصدية في مدارس الأونروا في جنوب عمان. إستخدمت الدراسة استبياناً ومقابلة لجمع البيانات التي تم تحليلها باستخدام متوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية، وكشف التحليل أن الطالبات لديهن اتجاهات إيجابية تجاه التعلم مع الفصول الدراسية المقلوبة الالكترونية. وضعت عديد من الآثار التربوية والتوصيات بها

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصف المقلوب الالكتروني، الاتجاهات، تعلم المفردات.

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Introduction and background

The ultimate role of vocabulary in language learning and use is universally recognized, vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of foreign language, learning, understanding vocabulary and word meaning are a requisite for good reading comprehension. A learner who does not understand words is not likely to understand the reading text (Al-Damireel & Bataineh, 2016; Al-Farra, 2011; Al- Qahtani, 2015, Chen, 2016; Haayati, 2016; Ramezanali, 2017; Webb, 2009). In this regard, Koda (2005) claimed that vocabulary learning increases L2 reading comprehension, facilitates the acquisition of L2 linguistic knowledge, enhances the mastery of verbal processing skills and thus in turns enhances the overall development of L2 reading proficiency, moreover ;without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. (Nagy, 2005).

On the other hand, practitioners believe that in the educational settings Technology has become an integral part. In light of the technological developments, which have altered the ways educators teach and students learn (Wells, de Lange & Fieger 2008), the utilization of technology enriches learning environments and creates better learning opportunities for the students and enables teachers to create more engaging and motivating classroom atmosphere (Basal, 2015). As a result, there is a continuing pedagogical challenge to transfer the educational environments to suit the new generation of the digital age, hence new models, approaches and strategies of teaching have been emerged to suite the new technological environments. Research to date (e.g., Ally, 2004; Baniabdelrahman, Bataineh & Bataineh, 2007; Bataineh & Baniabdelrahman, 2006; Fisher, Higgins & Loveless, 2006; Harris, Mishra & Koehler, 2009) suggested that technology is a catalyst for teaching and learning, as it supports users with innovative, learner-paced opportunities for learning (Fisher, Higgins & Loveless, 2006). In this context, there seems to be a consensus among researchers and educators that flipped classroom instruction is as a vital tool for enhancing learning (Uzunboyly & Karagozlu, 2015; Alzaytuniya, 2016; Kishtah, 2016; Alsowat, 2016; Coufal, 2014; Al – Jarebah, 2017; AL Shaqaah, 2016; Jay, 2014).

Flipped Approach has occurred recently due to the influence of technology. Its origins started in early 1982 when Baker revised his lessons through using short videos (Baker, 2000). Later in 2000, Lage, Platt and Treglia implemented Baker`s similar procedure under new concept “The Inverted Classroom”. In this model students can learn outside the class. And

what they do at home should do inside the classroom. This inverted concept remains in the field of education until it is adapted in 2010 by Chemistry teachers Aaron Sams and Jonathan Bergmann who popularized the concept to Flipped Classroom Model. (FCM). (Tucker, 2012. As cited in Johnson, 2012, p.4).

Accordingly, the mingle between class and home activities can be explained through a comparison between the traditional and technological educational environments. (Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Wolff & Chan, 2016). Brame (2013) declared that in the Flipped Classroom Model students are taught the new materials through receiving them on videos outside the classroom a day before the class is held while in class all the time should be used for engaging in activities, discussing concepts they learnt at home, clarifying information, and investigating questions related to content, as a result the classroom turns to a place where active learning occurs. Consequently, three different flipped classroom models have been emerged. Bergmann and Sams (2012) proposed the Traditional Flipped Classroom Model which is defined as what is done at school done at home, homework done at home completed in class. Springen (as cited in Ozdaml & Asiksoy, 2016, p 14) presented the second model which is Partial Flipped Classroom Model which is less strict from the traditional model that encourages students to watch the videos out of class as enrichment activities. These videos are not obligatory for all students since some students lack the connection devices. Finally, the Holistic Flipped Classroom Model which comprises beside the four basic structures (Flexible Environments, Learning Culture, Intentional Content, and Professional Educators), three structures (Progressive Activities, Engaging Experiences, and Diversified Platforms) in which the total of home, mobile and physical classrooms synchronously are highly emphasized. In Holistic Flipped Classroom Model, lessons are treated as classrooms because all of them are supported and monitored through logging on to the platform which enables students to preview/review course lectures, attend synchronous class sessions, discuss course content with the instructor and with classmates, and offer reflections. The lesson that has to be watched and material that has to be examined before class could be conducted in one of the Mobile or Cloud or Asynchronous classroom environments. The teacher could require the students to conduct various hands-on activities, such as uploading reports or taking online quizzes. (Chen, 2014).

Similarly, empirical research has shown that flipped classroom as advantageous for EFL learners' proficiency and achievement not only in reading comprehension (Huang & Hong, 2015 ;Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016; Abaeian & Samadi, 2016; Hsieh, Wu & Marek, 2016; Karimi & Hamzavi, 2017); Hashemifardnia et al,2018) but across the school subjects (Enfield, 2013; Johnson, 2013; AL-Zain, 2015; Nawi et al., 2015; Ahmad, 2016; Channy & Suksan, 2016; Qeshta, 2016; Al- Shakaa, 2016).More specifically, the Flipped Classroom Model presented with a platform as Edmodo, Moodle, etc is reported to contribute significantly to prove students' achievements and attitudes across many different fields (Chen & Chen, 2014; Sung, 2015;Mori, 2016; Zuraidah, 2016; Wu, et al., 2017; Guo, 2017; Sojayapan & Khlaisang, 2018).

Accordingly, flipped classroom instruction has become one of the recent trends which has a great impact across school subjects, and integrate Technology among its variety of structures. Teachers through the presented flipped classroom model can formulate Video with various forming equipment: as Screen-Cast-O-Mattic, Camtasia PC, TechSmith Relay etc.... learning management system are not only broadcast videos, they can also provide interaction with students as Moodle, Edmodo,etc. Edmodo, which is a social networking website used for educational purposes, is highly recommended among practitioners because it allows students to receive and submit assignments online, allows teacher to student and student to student communication, creates a more collaborative learning environment tool for teachers and minimizes the isolation that teaching all day in the classroom can create. (Edmodo, 2019)

Problem, purpose, questions of the research

Although vocabulary learning has come to occupy a prominent role in different fields of life in general and in learning languages in particular and has been given much attention in the educational system in UNRWA and Jordanian schools, EFL learners performance in reading comprehension tests is still not at the desired level. Researchers and practitioners reported that their students still find it difficult to comprehend texts, (e.g Al Udaini, 2011; Bataineh, Mayyas 2017; Bataineh, Baniabdelrahman, & Bani Khalaf 2017; Al- Jamal, Al-Hawamleh, Al-Jamal 2013; Keshta, 2016).

This current study aims to examine the potential effect of electronic flipped classroom instruction on EFL tenth grade students' attitudes towards vocabulary learning. To achieve the purpose of this study, the following question is addressed:

1. What are EFL tenth grade students` attitudes towards learning vocabulary via utilizing the electronic flipped classroom instruction?

Sampling, methods and procedure

The participants of the study were 67 EFL female tenth grade students (who were distributed into two groups 34 experimental group and 33 control group) who were purposefully selected from at Natheif Preparation Girls School / 2 which was one of UNRWA schools in South Amman Area . To identify students' attitudes towards learning with flipped classroom two instruments were used (a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview which were built based on variety of studies as Salih and Khalaf 2017, Al-Harbi1 and Alshumaimer1 (2016), Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018))

The researcher herself interviewed 7 of the participants of the study who volunteered to participate in the interview. A semi-structured interview contained four open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted over individual meetings with the participants who were allowed to answer in either English or Arabic ,each interview lasted for 8-10 minutes based on each participant's answers and interaction with the researcher. The researcher recorded the interviews and analyzed them by identifying the frequent themes. The validity of the instruments were established by an expert jury of EFL university professors whose recommendations were considered in amending the final versions of the tests.

The treatment: Instructing the experimental and control groups

In conducting the research, the control group was taught per the guidelines of the prescribed Teacher`s Book (Action Pack 10). The control group was taught by the original teacher whereas the experimental group was taught by the researcher who designed an instructional program with 45-minute class sessions. In each session students were exposed to three stages. *Stage One before the class (preparation phase)* students accessed to Edmodo platform a day before the class, downloaded and studied the videos then shared them with their classmates and did an online quiz *Stage Two. In Class (Active learning phase)* in which the time was divided for various interactive activities. *Stage Three. After Class (Reflection phase)* this was a free practice of the acquired vocabulary items. Students independently, did some self-study reading activities .Then they kept a record of all their self study activities in the progress corner or attached files that were available via the Edmodo platform. After the treatment the researcher distributed the questionnaire and conducted the semi-structured interview.

Findings of the study

The research question sought students' attitudes towards learning with flipped classroom instruction. The mean scores and standard deviations of the questionnaire were calculated as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: means and standard deviations were calculated for the students' attitudes flipped instruction

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	Through the introduced online vocabulary videos, I have enough time to learn the meaning of the new words	3.97	1.150	High
2	Through the videos, I have enough time to learn and practice pronouncing the new words	3.61	1.306	Moderate
3	The flipped instruction made it easier for me to find the synonyms and antonyms of the words	3.89	1.371	High
4	The flipped instruction helped me improve my skill in using the context to find the meaning of unknown words	3.84	1.405	High
5	Online vocabulary quizzes are helpful because they give effective immediate feedback	4.08	1.194	High
6	I feel that the Online resources (online dictionary) was helpful for me in defining the new words	4.08	1.148	High
7	I like submitting assignments and receiving online feedback through Edmodo platform	3.84	1.386	High
8	I prefer to hear my teacher discussing the new words and duplicating them on my notebook	3.79	1.398	High
9	I prefer my teacher to pronounce the new words	3.97	1.325	High
10	I prefer to discuss synonyms and antonyms on the board with my teacher	3.37	1.384	Moderate
11	I feel that the flipped instruction did not help me at all	3.95	1.064	High
12	I understand the new words more when the teacher explains them in the class	4.11	1.269	High
13	I prefer to use the activity book glossary to define the new words	4.03	1.305	High
14	The best way to vocabulary learning skills is to have my teacher lecture on them in class	4.18	.955	High
15	I feel more confident about my learning due to the flipped instruction.	3.74	1.178	High
17	I feel I am more in charge of my learning through the flipped instruction	4.03	1.241	High

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
19	I felt more engaged in flipped instruction than in other classes I have taken	3.97	1.262	High
20	Learning with flipped instruction is just a waste of time	4.18	.955	High

Moreover, the participants' responses to the semi-structured interview questions were analyzed to gain better insights into their learning with the flipped classroom for general and academic purposes and the perceived utility of this use. Several themes emerged, most important amongst which are the following: (1) their use of flipped classroom enhanced different opportunities for collaboration and discussions within the classroom; (2) their use of flipped classroom emphasizing human–technology and human–human interactions. Students reported that they had diverse backgrounds, for example, different ways of acquiring and processing information. The flipped classroom helped them to accommodate these backgrounds and learn from each other. Moreover the interaction and constructive online feedback enhanced their reading skills and vocabulary; (3) their use of flipped classroom has reportedly increased their motivation for language study in general and reading and vocabulary in particular.

Discussion

Most of the students' interview responses and questionnaire revealed that students had mostly positive attitude towards EFCI for developing their vocabulary learning, not to mention the added advantages of working in a non-threatening collaborative atmosphere, which reportedly affected both their self-confidence and written performance. These results are consistent with those reported by Huang and Hong (2015), Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016), Abaeian and Samadi (2016), Hsieh, et al., (2016). Furthermore, Benjamin Franklin once stated, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." Franklin's quote embodies the core of the flipped classroom concept, which is the positive environments that increases engagement in and out classroom, which in turns helps them to overcome different obstacles. These positive attitudes may be readily attributed to EFCI effective components (*Collaboration, Culture shift, Flexible environments and Intentional content*) that enable the interaction between the teachers and the students, shifting from teacher – centered class to Students-centered, facilitating different spaces for collaboration and technique for evaluating students' performance (Bergmann and Sams, 2014).

In this fashion, they were improved with the learning materials via Edmodo platform as PowerPoint slides, audio scripts, YouTube videos, hyperlinks and worksheets. The posts via the platform Edmodo enabled the participants to chat and thus facilitated their collaboration in practicing learning vocabulary skills. The researcher developed quizzes, ask and answer posts, assignments and learning logs and thus to enhance students' engagements since they received immediate feedback which in turns developed their learning. (Harmon et al ,2009).

for example the heavy teaching loads in UNRWA schools and crowded classes prevent students and teacher to talk freely during the school day ,while in flipped classroom instruction they can be in touch with their teacher most of the time in and out class since they study at home, receive the immediate feedback and at class they also receive feedback not only from their teacher but also from their colleagues via the Edmodo. EFCI was highly recommended to be utilized during vacations due to its flexibility in transferring lessons to be learnt at home when schools are closed.

Conclusion, Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

The study is limited by few considerations: the participants were UNRWA tenth-grade female students whose needs and performance may differ from those of students in other grade levels, other schools, and/or other regions in- and outside UNRWA, but a longer interim may have augmented the generalizability of the findings.

These findings have given rise to recommendations for teachers, textbook writers, and researchers. EFL teachers are urged to engage in EFCI-based instruction, in this research to improve their students' vocabulary. Similarly, textbook writers and curriculum designers are called upon to address the advantages of incorporating less conventional modes of instruction, such as EFCI, for facilitation of teaching and learning vocabulary. Researchers are also recommended to expand the findings of this research through examining the potential effectiveness of EFCI on other language skills. Future research may also involve larger samples over an extended interim to improve the generalizability of the findings and examine how human factors, such as gender and cognitive style.

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