# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADOPTING FLIPPED LEARNING *APPROACH IN AN APPLIED LINGUISTICS COURSE* FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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**ABSTRACT:** *As students enter the fourth year of an English Department, an increased responsibility for a lot of linguistic information is highly desirable. Students need to do a lot of efforts inside and outside the class. Students who arrive in class with assigned tasks completed, notes reviewed, and prepared for classroom activities are developing the ability to be self-directed learners. Limited classroom contact time can be effectively utilized by focusing on further review and explanation. This paper investigated the effectiveness of adopting flipped learning approach and the changes implemented to "Introduction to Applied Linguistics" course at English Department, College of Administrative and Human Science in Qassim Private Colleges. The students were asked to do some tasks inside and outside the classroom. These tasks included short pre-class assignments and quizzes that were designed to increase students' preparation for the next class meeting, as such flipping class meeting preparation to outside the classroom. A benefit of these changes is that the instructor can significantly reduce the time spent lecturing and focus on students' understanding of linguistics and focusing on students' activities in-class. This focus fosters student-centered learning with the student having the responsibility to prepare for each class session. Participants were 33 fourth level students in English Department from Qassim Private Colleges in Saudi Arabia. The pre-posttest comprised five different types of questions including multiple choice, true or false, defining linguistic terms, compare between the advantages and disadvantages, and analyzing structures. Results of the t. test analysis revealed that adopting flipped learning Approach yielded significant effects on students' linguistic level.*

**KEYWORDS**: face to face instruction, online learning, blended learning, flipped learning

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the study

As students, has come up to the fourth level of an English Department, an increased responsibility for a lot of linguistic information is highly desirable. Traditional learning which prevails for centuries is not enough for them. The world is changing rapidly and our classroom keep silent without changing. Our class are kept the same for over centuries; the only change is slight like the board color, marker instead of the chalk. It seems difficult not to use technology that is available in their hands. However, as the decades crept closer to the turn of the 21st century, work environments began to change. The Internet and mobile computers became more ubiquitous, access to information is abundant, and businesses know this. Information no longer has to be memorized in order to be accessible, (Bormann, 2014). In addition, asking them to be totally on line without any support or guidance from their tutors seems difficult to them. Therefore, there

should be a solution to such dilemma. Blended learning appears as a solution to such difficulties, (Abdul Fattah, 2012).

Blended learning seems as a link connects both of the two environments, face to face instruction and online learning. Flipped classroom has come into existence in 2007 as a concept in the field of teaching. It started with two science teachers in Woodland Park High School in Colorado (Siegle, 2014). In addition, Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams decided to use screen-capturing software to record introductory lessons and have students watch these lessons as homework. According to Bergmann and Sams (2012) "the weakness of the traditional approach is that not all students come to class prepared to learn" (p. 31). Their primary reasons for adopting this technique was that they felt their students came to class well not prepared.

**The main differences between traditional learning and flipped learning**
To ensure the equality of comparison, the constituents of both learning would be analyzed in the following table:

**Table (1)**
**A comparative analysis between traditional learning and flipped learning**

| Comparative points | Traditional learning | Flipped learning |
|---|---|---|
| a.    Environment | 1.    Inside    the    classroom, lectures are the only means 2.    Outside    the    classroom, Practice    exercises    &    problem solving | 1. Inside the classroom, Practice exercises & problem solving 2. outside the classroom, Video / PowerPoint lectures closed-ended quizzes & practice exercises |
| b.    Teacher's role | Represents the authority, source of information, deliver his lecture and answer students' questions. | Prepares his material at home, He is supervisor, developer, researcher, guide and helper. |
| c.    Students' roles | Inside the classroom only and go for his own outside the class. | 1.    They do higher level analysis/ critical thinking 2.    guided support, providing examples – links between content and real world |
| d.    Teaching tools | Classroom    setting;    boards, projector, marks, | 1.    Storages; dropbox, mediafire, etc., for sending video files and presentations 2.    Social media programs; WhatsApp, Facebook, etc., for discussions 3.    Mail; Gmail, Yahoo, for receiving home assignments. |

**Applied linguistics and flipped learning**
Adopting flipped learning approach in applied linguistic course was a necessity to the teacher of the course. This is due to the followings;

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a.      Applied linguistics is a broad science that could not be taught in a class time.
b.      More knowledge inside the class make students bored during the lecture.
c.      You need to go back / refer to linguistic science
d.      Limited time for the course (2 hours a week)
e.      Traditional assessment consumes lecture time
f.      More attention is paid to student's skills not the content

## Context of the Problem

Based on a pilot study conducted at the beginning of the second term 2015/2016 on the first level in English department, in Qassim Private Colleges. This pilot study was based on students' backgrounds about linguistics from the previous courses. This study represented the basics through which the content of the new course, applied linguistics, is based on. The students did not perform well. Therefore, it was difficult as a teacher to start a new course.   In addition, the two credit hours are not enough to go on for this course.

## Statement of the problem

Thus, the study problem is identified in fourth level students' poor performance in linguistics. It was clear through the pilot study results. Therefore, the current study attempted to develop students' linguistic level in applied linguistic course through adopting the flipped learning approach. To reach this aim, the study tried to answer the following main question:  What is the effectiveness of adopting flipped learning *approach in an applied linguistics course* for university students**?**

This main question is divided into the following sub-questions:
1-      What are the theoretical bases of using flipped learning approach in teaching?
2-      What steps should be undertaken for adopting flipped learning approach in applied linguistics course?

## Hypotheses of the study

 There would be a statistically significant difference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the fourth level of English Department students in linguistic level between the pretest and the posttest in favor of the posttest.

## Objectives of the study

The study attempted to use flipped learning approach to develop fourth level students at QPC in applied linguistics course.

## Definition of Terms
## Flipped learning

Many definitions for flipped learning, but one of the simplest and first is by Lage, Platt, and Treglia (2000). "Inverting the classroom means that events that have traditionally taken place inside the classroom now take place outside the classroom and vice versa" (p. 32). In addition, Bell, Matthew R., (2015), defined flipping the classroom as a teaching strategy that reverses the role of the classroom instruction and out- of class homework. In this research, flipped learning means student centered approach adopted to develop students' performance in applied linguistic course.

## Applied linguistics

Jebastian, A., (2015) defined Applied Linguistics as it is the science that is concerned with the systematic study of language structure, the acquisition of first and subsequent languages, the role of language in communication, and the status of language as the product of particular cultures and other social groups.  In this research, applied Linguistics examines the structure of language and its role in communication; explores how children acquire language; studies how the skills of second-language speakers develop; and investigates how the social or cultural environment interacts with language. Linguistics and Applied Linguistics is a challenging and stimulating discipline, offering many opportunities for original work.

## Review of the literature

Students, who enrolled in Applied linguistics course in level four in Qassim Private Colleges, were not able to cope with the content of the course which was based on their previous information in introduction to Linguistics and Linguistics Two Courses. Therefore, the traditional method for teaching inside the classroom was not effective with them. The traditional lecture for them was an outmoded style of teaching (Datig & Ruswick, 2013). In addition, spending time with students in lecture retrieving their forgotten information about general linguistics was boring and time wasted activities. Moreover, the learners today are not like before. They have an easy and quick access to information and prefer to learn in active and collaborative environments Vaughan (2014). The flipped classroom has different names. Halili & Zainuddin, 2015, called it reverse teaching. McLaughlin et al., 2014), called it backward classroom.  Bates & Galloway, 2012, called it inverted. Simply, flipped classroom is n changing class from presenting and explaining information to discussing and accomplishing home assignment inside the class.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF FLIPPED LEARNING

The following figure represents the theoretical foundation of flipped classroom that incorporates three items.
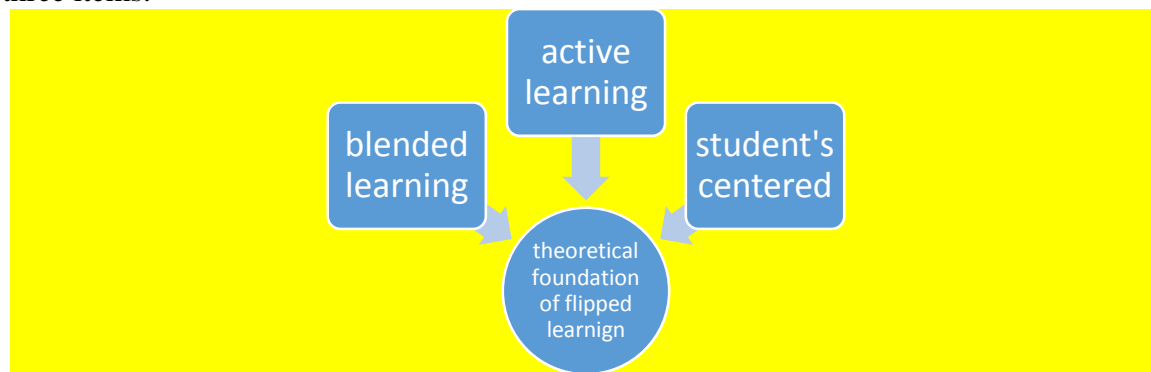


**Figure (1) Theoretical foundations of flipped classroom**

The theoretical foundations for flipped classroom are derived from the nature of interaction between students and their teacher. First foundation is blended learning that is a mixture from face to face interaction and online learning.
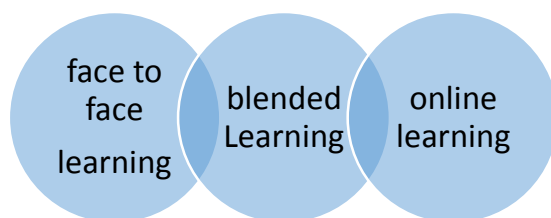
**Figure (2) Abdul Fattah, 2012, Blended learning definition**

Blended learning represented the cornerstone in flipped learning. It maximizes the benefits of online learning and traditional learning. The second foundation of flipped learning is active learning concept. The flipped classroom can be used to include active learning elements in class while maintaining the ability to cover critical course material (Leicht, Zappe, Messner, & Litzinger, 2012). In a "Flipped Classroom," students'' initial exposure to the course material or lesson **i**s shifted from the classroom to home through different techniques including instructional videos, Power Points presentations, individual or collaborative activities. Finally, student come to class. It is used for practice, exercises, discussion-based activities, and team-based learning.
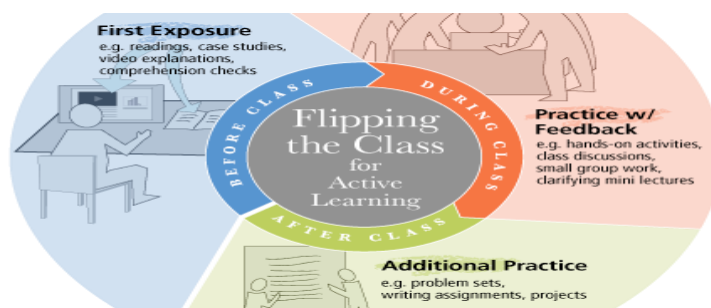


**Figure 3. Flipped learning for classroom**

The previous figure represents the relationship between active learning and flipped learning. It is noted that flipped learning stages, pre, during, and after class activities are the same for active learning. The next figure represents the role of the student and teacher in both of traditional learning environment and flipped learning environment.
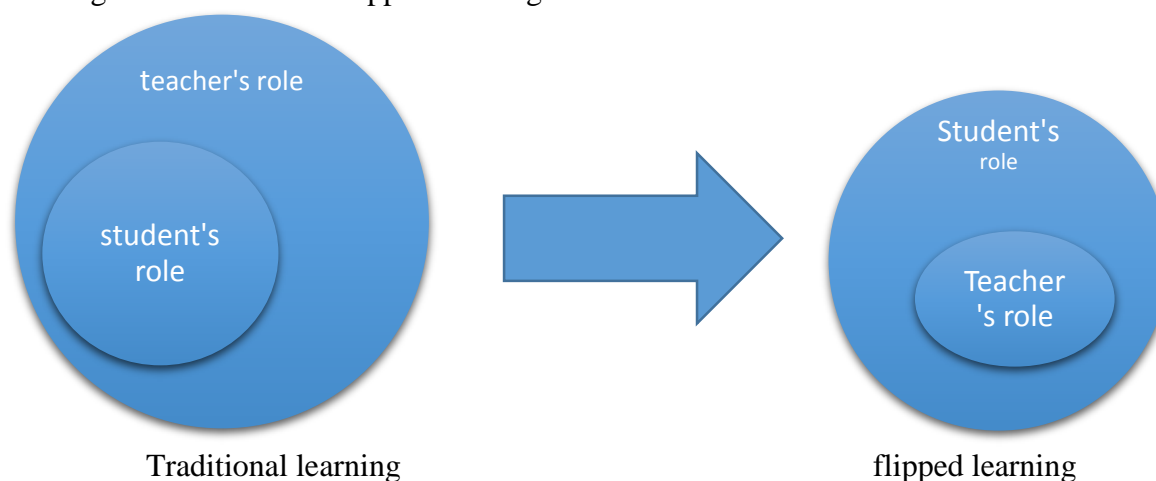


Traditional learning      flipped learning

**Figure (4) student's role in two different learning environments**

The third foundation of the flipped model is the student-centred approach (Clark, 2015). Moving learners away from an instructor-centred learning environment (Johnson, 2012) to another environment where teachers become real organizers, mentors, and facilitators (Ahmed, S. 2016), The fundamental goal of the flipped model is simple: to maximize the value of student–teacher time. Perhaps the real value of the model is in encouraging teachers and administrators to think deeply about this issue and begin experimenting with class structure (Sota, 2016).

## Related studies of flipped learning

Bormann, 2014, conducted accumulative study to investigate the effectiveness of a flipped classroom model on student engagement and achievement as well as the affordances of a flipped model vs. that of a traditional model. He explored more than thirty peer-reviewed journal articles with a sound research methodology published within the last five years were critically analyzed and evaluated. His literature review was summarized in the following table.

**Table 2**
**Bormann, 2014,** *Students that Prefer the Flipped Model vs. a Traditional Model*

| Percent | Author | Student sample | Level/ Course Content |
|---|---|---|---|
| **80.00%** | Butt | 100 | Undergraduate/ Actuarial |
| **85.00%** | Davies, Dean, & Ball | 53 | Undergraduate/Information Spreadsheets |
| **88.20%** | Enfield | 37 | Undergraduate/ Multimedia |
| **Qualitative surveys that grouped open ended answers thematically showed a significant preference for the flipped classroom.** | Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette | 108 | Undergraduate/ Business |
| **83.30%** | Lemmer | 100 | Graduate/ Legal Research |
| **84.00%,** | Morin, Kecskemety, Harper, & Clingan | 473 | Undergraduate/ Engineering |
| **Qualitative surveys that grouped openended answers thematically showed a significant preference for the flipped environment.** | Murphree | 106 | Undergraduate/ History Survey |
| **Qualitative surveys that grouped open ended answers thematically showed a** | Rowe, Frantz, & Bozalek | 25 | Undergraduate/ Medical |

| significant preference for the flipped environment. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Qualitative surveys showed comments strongly in favor of the flipped environment. | Strayer | 49 | Undergraduate/ Statistics |
| Qualitative surveys that grouped open ended answers thematically showed a significant preference for the flipped environment. | Tune, Sturek, & Basile | 27 | Graduate/ Cardiovascular, Respiratory, and Renal Physiology |

The major findings of his study reveal that flipped learning can afford students a more engaging environment that can lead to higher achievement and a better preparedness for 21st-century learning and work environments.

**Lin. P & Chen, H., 2016,** investigated the effects of flipped classroom on the learning effectiveness, while using learning satisfaction as the mediator. He conducted his experiment on both the instructors and students of technical and vocational colleges in two different terms. The findings revealed that learning satisfaction has a partial mediating effect.

**Ahmed. S. (2016)** investigated the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model on Egyptian EFL students' listening comprehension. The sample of the study was thirty-four 3rd-year EFL students at the Faculty of Education, Suez University. Paired-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant improvement in participants' listening comprehension (t=11.341, p<0.05) between the pretest and the posttest in favor of the posttest. Therefore, it was concluded that the flipped classroom had a significant effect on the listening comprehension of Egyptian EFL students.

**Ahmed, H. (2016)** conducted an analytical study about flipped learning. The research paper assured that different views of flipped learning from just a "fashion" of adding more mechanism to the classroom to it is as a tool for shifting present pedagogy customized according to the individual needs of the learners instead of the whole group. This study reveal real need for the application of flipped learning.

**Ahmed, M. (2016).** 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 sample was 60 students at Qassim University divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. The instruments of the study are an EFL writing test and a questionnaire to measure students' attitude towards flipping. The result showed statistically significant
difference between the mean scores of the pre-and post-applications of the questionnaire of the experimental group in favor of the post application. This difference can be attributed to using flipping.

The previous related studies represented the base of this research. It is in line with Bormann, 2014, in assurance the importance of Plipped learning as a main trend in teaching. In addition, it summarized the main researches conducted till 2014. This research is, also, in line with other researches in promoting flipped learning in English language teaching.

**METHOD**

*Research Design*
A one-group pre-posttest quasi-experimental design was employed. Students were pretested on Applied linguistics before the treatment and then post tested after it.

*Variables*
The study included an independent variable (the flipped classroom model) and dependent variable (Applied linguistics).

*Participants*
Participants were 30 second-year EFL majors at the Qassim Private Colleges. They were in level four, English Department. They all ranged between 18-34 years of age.

*Procedures*
The experimental procedures of the present study were carried out at Qassim Private Colleges, Saudi Arabia, during the second term of the 2015/2016 academic year within the "An Introduction to *Applied Linguistic*" course. These procedures were executed in three stages:
1)      Conducting pretest.
It was conducted before the treatment.
2)      Adopting the flipped classroom
 As for using the flipped classroom, it lasted for 8 weeks.
3)      Conducting the post test.
It was conducted after the treatment.

**The treatment**
**The treatment was divided into three stages:**

**Before Class**
The students were asked to watch the video and download PowerPoint presentation about the class topic. In addition, they answered online questions at the end of presentation. They emailed their answers to the teacher before the class time. Through this stage, the students had the opportunity to get knowledge about the lecture topic and discuss together the difficult points in the video or presentations.

**During Class**
The teacher started the class by responding to students' questions about the video and presentation. Then he checked their answers to the questions at the end of presentation.
processes.  This process took up to twenty minutes of the lecture time. The remaining time of the lecture was used to apply concepts from the video and presentation. The teacher went on with more active learning like brainstorming, concept mapping and discussion about the course material.

**After Class**
The students answered additional exercises related to the lecture. They emailed their answers to the teacher.s They exchanged information with their peers. They asked to surf the web for more information about the lecture topics. During this treatment, they are asked to write a research about one of the main concepts discussed in lectures.

**RESULT**

Paired-samples t-test was used to test the difference between the means of scores of the students on the pretest and the posttest of Applied linguistics course.

**Table (3) Paired Samples Test**

| | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Lower | Upper | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Pair 1 | VAR00001 - VAR00002 | 50.04545 | 23.92130 | 2.94451 | 44.16486 | 55.92604 | 16.996 | 65 | .000 |

Table (3) showed that there was significant difference between the means of scores of the students on the pretest and posttest. This difference was statistically significant (t=16.996, p<0.05).

**DISCUSSION**

In the present study, it was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant difference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in level four students at Qassim Private Colleges between the pretest and the posttest in favor of the posttest. A paired-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in favor of the posttest (t=16.996, p<0.05). A probable reason for the result reached in this study may be due to adopting flipped learning in Applied Linguistics course. The students made use of watching videos and PowerPoint presentation before coming to class. When they came to class, they tried to overcome the difficulties they faced in understanding videos and presentation. Therefore, they improved their level in applied linguistics. In addition, they worked hard to finish their assignments and surfing the web to write the research about one of the concepts offered in the course. In this respect, many studies found that the use of flipped learning was effective in learning process (Bormann, 2014, Ahmed, S. and Ahmed, M.2016).

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the result of the present study, the researcher concluded that the flipped classroom model improved students' level in applied linguistics course. Adopting flipped learning in teaching process could be used in other courses or implemented by other teachers Qassim Private Colleges. The basic rule of flipped learning represented in watching videos and studying presentation before coming to class activate both of the teacher and students to work together for better understanding of the subjects. They came to class to be active and asked about their difficulties they faced. What

happens in traditional learning is that students come to class and he is asked to be ready for surprise. He doesn't know about the topic. He keeps silent for a while to see what is hidden. Flipped learning represents the link between students and the teacher.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the result of the present study, the researcher recommends:
1) adopting flipped learning for enhancing different language skills like writing and reading,
2) encouraging teachers to post their course material on the Internet,
3) devoting class time to active learning, rather than lecturing, and
4) the impact of the flipped model on EFL learners' self-directed learning.

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