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**The reality of implementing flipped classroom  
in teaching Arabic English translation in  
Saudi Arabia**

**Abstract**

Over the years in the Teachers Program, they have constantly struggled with how to organize and successfully implement English lessons to engage students while at the same time covering the goals set forth in the Saudi English Language Curriculum. Despite this, learning English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia still faces many difficulties, especially with regard to the educational methods that are used, especially after the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the closure of educational institutions, and the shift to distance education. Flipped classrooms are considered one of the most effective educational methods in education, in recent years, flipped classrooms have sought to provide more authentic types of student involvement, allowing students to make better use of class time, but they did not receive much attention by researchers and scholars in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the researcher conducted this research



to identify the difficulties of teaching the English language and the reality of the application of flipped classes, and the importance of its application in the English language classes.

**Keywords:** English, Flipped, Classroom, Learning, Student, Teachers.

### **Introduction**

In the language classroom, translation, as the fifth language skill, is a key component of students' linguistic and communicative ability, preparing them for real-life circumstances in their education and future careers (Naimushin, 2002). "The process of translating terms or content from one language into another; and the writing or spoken rendition of the meaning of a word, speech, book, or other text in another language" is how translation is described (Stevenson, 2003, p.1889).

Stakeholders and the public in Saudi Arabia have placed a high value on English education. English is currently required in all schools, and it is regarded as a fundamental subject at several institutions; in fact, English is the primary language of instruction in several university departments. Many native English speakers work in Saudi colleges, and the kingdom has a large number of English teachers (Alfahid, 2017).

The English language has become the property of everyone in the workplace. Saudi Arabia is no different. Saudi schools, colleges, and universities have been teaching English with main and sincere attention for nearly a century. Nonetheless, Saudi students, like non-native learners



in other non-English speaking nations, have numerous challenges in learning English (Ashraf, 2018).

Due to recent advancements in educational technology, flipped classrooms are now widely used in classrooms across the country (Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013). Learners are expected to come to class with the knowledge needed to actively participate in problem-solving actions with their peers in this educational environment, which can be described as student-centered. They take an important role at the center of learning throughout the entire instructional cycle. The approach is founded on the concepts that meaningful peer contact promotes knowledge construction and that teachers can provide more immediate and tailored assistance and feedback through activities (Kim, Park, Jang, & Nam, 2017; Zarrinabadi, & Ebrahimi, 2018).

Universities and schools around the world were forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic's breakout. Due to the closing of educational institutions, the educational process was interrupted, and most schools and colleges turned to online learning (Farrah and al-Bakry, 2020). To deal with the Covid 19 pandemic and resume the teaching/learning process, numerous educational institutions implemented appropriate methods. The flipped classroom, which tries to engage students both within and without the classroom, is one of the ways that has been proposed. The materials are presented through pre-class input such as recorded video lessons under the flipped learning technique. Because learners must go to the classroom to complete some exercises and activities, the flipped classroom allows them to spend more time practicing their language in the classroom (Lockwood, 2014).



## **Research problem**

Learner translators face a struggle in producing an exact and correct translation from/to a second/foreign language for two reasons; To begin with, translation education is complex, necessitating more dynamic instructional methods (Li, 2006). Second, several approaches to learning translation necessitate greater flexibility and adaptability to the students' needs, as well as the creation of links between language instruction and translation pedagogy (Carreres, 2006).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom's Vision 2030 have sought to work on developing educational methods, especially those used in teaching English, and this appeared significantly during the spread of the Covid 19 pandemic and the transformation of education from the traditional form to the patterns of distance education. Flipped classrooms are one of the most prominent modern educational methods that must be used extensively in education. Despite this, the method of teaching English using flipped classrooms has not received the attention of researchers and scholars in this field, especially in Saudi Arabia. Through the researcher's search and review of previous global, regional, and local studies and literature, he did not find any of the local studies that examined the importance and reality of using flipped classrooms in learning English. In light of this, the researcher decided to implement this research to shed light on the challenges of learning English and the reality of using flipped classes in learning English in educational institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The research problem can be represented by the following question:



- What is the reality of using flipped classrooms in learning English in educational institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

### **Research aim**

The current research seeks to shed light on the challenges of learning English and the reality of using flipped classes in learning English in educational institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### **Research significance**

The current research derives its significance from the importance of the topic it deals with, which is the use of flipped classrooms in learning the English language. When it comes to the significance and usefulness of flipped classrooms, it is thought that they can help EFL students improve their reading comprehension. Comprehension entails linking what has been read to what the reader already understands and thinking about all of this information until it is comprehended (as cited in Mohammadi & Davarbina, 2015). The significance of the research also lies in shedding light on some of the challenges facing English language students and teachers, and thus experience the teaching methods used in teaching English. In addition to drawing the attention of teachers and education officials to the importance of using flipped classrooms in teaching English and other educational curricula.

### **Flipped Classroom Definition**

A flipped classroom is a novel pedagogical style in which students study video lectures (which can be found on the Internet or pre-recorded by professors) at their own leisure before attending



courses in which they participate in group activities or have their questions answered by the lecturers (Stone, 2012). This is the polar opposite of traditional teaching methods, in which learners are required to listen to their lecturers during class but participate in activities that encourage contact and collaboration outside of class (Mok, 2014; Shimamoto, 2012; Talbert, 2012).

The flipped classroom is a teaching method in which teachers provide students video courses to watch outside of class and use class time to practice a range of active learning approaches (Tucker, 2012). Instructors may be the emphasis of the lesson in the traditional classroom approach, resulting in teacher-centered instruction (McCombs & Whisler, 1997). The flipped classroom, on the other hand, is a type of mixed learning that combines face-to-face learning with idea discussion with online distance learning with video lessons (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015; Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Love et al., 2014).

The flipped classroom, according to Bishop and Verleger (2013), consists of two parts: "interactive group classroom materials inside the classroom, and direct computer-based individual education outside the classroom" (p. 5).

### **The benefit of Flipped Classroom**

Previous research into the usage of the flipped classroom pedagogy in several subject areas (see, e.g., Gaughan, 2014) has generally found favorable feedback from students (Butt, 2014; Mok, 2014; Musib, 2014) as well as a number of benefits.

First, a review of 24 studies on flipped classroom methods indicated that students had mixed attitudes about watching online videos rather than attending classes. The participants, on the other hand, were generally favorable about in-class group activities (Bishop & Verleger, 2013), because they were useful to their learning (Musib, 2014). Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2014) discovered mixed reactions among students in a research of the flipped classroom in a university course, however they mentioned receiving more interactions with their teacher and colleagues in a flipped classroom environment than in a regular classroom environment.

The development of generic abilities is another benefit of a flipped classroom. Learners' communication and collaboration abilities (as instances of generic skills) can be developed through talking with teachers or colleagues, or by working on group activities (McLaughlin et al., 2014). When Ng (2016) implemented the flipped classroom pedagogy in educating pre-service kindergarten teachers in photo editing, students gave high ratings to survey aspects related to generic skills (with the development of self-study skills being rated the highest).

Furthermore, there is a higher level of student involvement in the learning process (Musib, 2014). When learners are given video lectures instead of textbook readings, they are substantially more prepared for class (De Grazia, Falconer, Nicodemus, & Medlin, 2012).

Because of the availability of pre-recorded lesson films, learners also have control over their education. Slow learners will benefit from this feature because they can watch the online videos over and over until they understand the material (Mok, 2014; Musib, 2014). To put it another



way, the flipped classroom can help students gain a better comprehension of concepts and knowledge, as well as help them succeed in school (McLaughlin et al., 2014).

Kong (2014) discovered that the 107 students from four Secondary 1 classes exhibited statistically significant gains in domain knowledge in his flipped classroom research of an integrated humanities subject that spanned two academic years and involved a 13-week trial learning period (in developing information literacy competency and critical thinking skills). Ng (2016) discovered that the flipped classroom aided learners' education since the 74 Higher Diploma students she taught were able to apply self-learned topic information to a real-world setting. Despite this, Guy and Marquis' (2016) quasi-experimental study comparing 433 business-major students' learning in two modes reported that learners only performed slightly better in a flipped classroom environment than in a traditional lecture-based educational technique (83 percent and 82 percent in the students' average final grades on course assessment, respectively).

Moreover, because learners must reflect on the relationship between the course materials they prepared prior to the lessons and the activities completed in class, employing the flipped classroom pedagogy can increase student's reflection and development of their reflective talents (Roehl et al., 2013; Vaughan, 2014).

### **Teaching English in Saudi Arabia**

The policies and strategies for teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia have changed dramatically over time. When English was introduced for intermediate public-school



students throughout the monarchy in 1943, the first policy guiding EFL instruction in schools was formed (Al-Ghamdi & Al-Saddat, 2002). Up until the 12th grade, learners were expected to study English. Nevertheless, EFL classes in private schools begin in the first grade (Faruk, 2013). In today's private schools and universities, English is taught at all grade levels (Al-Tamimi, 2019).

It is difficult to teach English in Saudi Arabia. Despite the Ministry of Education's efforts to improve the process of teaching and learning English, there is still much space for improvement. According to Al- Nasser (2015), the influence of one's mother tongue is a key impediment to learning English. Inadequate exposure to English in daily life, as well as the absence of English from the start of elementary school, restrict students from communicating effectively both orally and in writing. Students are not exposed to enough English because they begin learning English in the final year of primary school (Al-Nofaie, 2010). In fact, the kids are well aware that studying English would have been easier if it had been offered from the beginning. Jdetawy, 2011; Al-Abdan, 1993; Ashraf, 2018 are only a few of the many researchers who have concurred on comparable issues.

Learners in various English departments in Saudi universities' colleges of education and arts, as well as other four-year English programs at various institutions, take methodological courses that makeup 10% of their overall course load (Alfahid, 2017). This leads to the Saudi EFL pre-service teacher's lack of educational competency. Alhazmi (2003) and Alnasser (2015) accuse Saudi universities' teacher education programs for failing to provide students with the necessary content and practice to enhance their productivity.

According to Mahboob and Elyas (2014), English has become so prevalent in public and private schools in Saudi Arabia that it has spawned its own dialect: "Saudi English." This dialect of English is becoming more widely accepted in Saudi society, showing itself in culture, religion, and society. Nevertheless, according to Al-Tamimi (2019), instruction and comprehension aren't always robust, and some policies aren't entirely or effectively followed. However, it is true that EFL instruction is maturing and that attempts are being made to enhance it. A language curriculum must be designed with specific objectives in mind in order to be successful. As a result, Saudi Arabia's Higher Committee of Education is working to change EFL policy (Al-Shumaimeri, 2003). Several organizations have underlined the importance of developing an appropriate English curriculum with specific objectives (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013).

### **English language learning challenges**

According to a previous studies, Arab students have difficulties translating from English to Arabic. For instance, a common issue is the literal translation of English passive voice lines into Arabic (Khalil, 1993). The lack of attention paid to the non-equivalency syntactic structures among Arabic and English, as well as translation techniques, was blamed for this issue. According to other research, Arab students have difficulty translating legal writings published in English due to issues with grammar, layout, and substance (Farghal & Shunnaq, 1992). Furthermore, Farghal (1995) identified five lexical/discourse translation issues that Arab postgraduate students have while translating from English to Arabic: Students' changing of impersonal English pronouns for personal ones; finding formal and functional equivalence of lexical elements; and missing conceptual links between words (for example, addition, contrast,



and cause/effect). Thawabteh (2011) further stated that when subtitling from English to Arabic, Arab students face numerous language, cultural, and technical issues. Furthermore, Faris and Sahu (2013) discovered that 70% of participants in an Iraqi university's College of Education final year had challenges translating English collocations into Arabic.

The need to explore the impact of flipped classrooms on language learning has become increasingly relevant as inverted or flipped approaches have been more common in the instructional literature and more frequently utilized by practitioners in recent years (Moranski & Kim, 2016). The flipped classroom is a pedagogical technique that involves distributing instructional content online before class, but not always, and then engaging students in interactive group learning and/or critical problem-solving activities while the instructor is there (Herreid & Schiller, 2013).

## **Conclusion**

A flipped classroom has the ability to help students learn important skills for the twenty-first century. It entails student collaboration, self-sufficiency, and critical thinking. Additionally, this type of education might provide the teacher more time in the classroom to facilitate an engaging discussion, which can help him or her identify pupils who require additional assistance. In this method, the instructor responds to the learners' needs and encourages them to be engaged and enthusiastic about teaching. Students will benefit from a flipped classroom because they will be able to focus on the difficult ideas they need to understand, particularly in mathematics.

The researcher made a modest effort in this study to highlight existing challenges in learning English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, as well as to shed light on the realities of using flipped courses to teach Arabic/English translation. According to the research, in order to tackle these obstacles and encourage learners now, teachers must create a positive learning environment by fostering positive interactions between teacher and student and implementing effective teaching practices like the usage of flipped classrooms. Coordinators and policymakers must focus on the aims of language programs and the interests of learners when selecting school teaching techniques and establishing curricula. Furthermore, any EFL class must have fewer people enrolled. To bring out the best in kids, assessment methods should be diversified. Finally, only English should be used as the medium of instruction and interaction in an EFL classroom.

The study also revealed that Saudi Arabia's teaching methods are outdated. First and foremost, it should be drummed into the teaching community that English is a life skill, similar to swimming, rather than a subject that requires passing grades. It is a language that must be learned, and what better way to do so than by using it. Even among the teaching community, using first language while on campus should be absolutely banned, as we all know that learners are good observers who learn the most by observing people and situations around them.



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