ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 4| April 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691|| ISI Value: 1.188

FLIPPING GRAMMAR LESSONS: FROM TEACHER-LED TO INTERACTIVE SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the implementation of flipped classroom techniques for English grammar and speaking skills among the first-year English language and literature students in three Uzbek universities: Navoiy Pedagogical University, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, and Uzbekistan State World Languages University in Tashkent. There were 166 participating students who were divided into two groups: 83 experimental, who received flipped grammar instruction with interactive speaking practice, and 83 controls, who received normal teacher-facilitated instruction. Interviews, pre- and post-speaking tests, and classroom observation were utilized to test the intervention effect. The results showed that the experimental group gained significantly in speaking proficiency with an average gain of 16.25%. The results suggest that flipped grammar instruction with interactive speaking activities can enhance students' speaking proficiency.

KEY WORDS: *Flipped Classroom, Grammar Lessons, Speaking Competence, Interactive Lessons.*

INTRODUCTION

Traditional language instruction has often relied on teacher-led grammar lessons, focusing primarily on theoretical knowledge and passive exercises. While this method has its merits, it often neglects the practical application of grammar, especially in speaking contexts. In recent years, the flipped classroom model has gained prominence as a pedagogical approach that can enhance student engagement and deepen learning by reversing the traditional flow of information. In a flipped classroom, students are introduced to instructional content outside the classroom (typically through videos or reading materials), and class time is dedicated to collaborative and interactive activities that promote deeper understanding and practical application.

This study aims to explore the impact of flipped grammar lessons on speaking proficiency among first-year English language and literature students in Uzbekistan. Specifically, it compares the effectiveness of flipped classrooms, with a focus on interactive speaking activities, to traditional teacher-led instruction. The research evaluates whether the flipped classroom approach can improve students' ability to use grammar in context and enhance their speaking skills.

As for grammar lessons, traditional language instruction has been dominating for many years, with a strong focus on theoretical understanding and passive activities. While this model has its benefits, there is almost no practical application use of grammar in real life situations, especially when speaking. The flipped classroom method has been a teaching strategy that has been developed over the past decade or so to boost student participation and improve learning by turning traditional instruction upside down. In a flipped classroom, instructional content is learned outside the classroom (typically by video or reading), and class time is utilized for collaborative and interactive learning that facilitates deeper learning and application in real life.

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of flipped grammar classes on speaking skill in first-year English language and literature students of Uzbekistan universities. More specifically, it examines the relative success of flipped classrooms, with a focus on interactive speaking practice, versus conventional instruction. The study evaluates whether or not the flipped classroom approach can improve students' performance in using grammar in context and enhance their speaking skill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The flipped classroom strategy has attracted widespread attention from educational research due to its ability to redefine traditional teaching methodologies and enhance student learning. The flipped classroom concept, as described by Bergmann and Sams (2012), flips the traditional lecture strategy on its side by delivering content outside the classroom, using class time for interactive learning activities. The strategy is particularly useful in language acquisition, since practice of the subject in real life counts. Bishop and Verleger (2013) found that flipped classrooms enhance student motivation and academic performance by promoting active engagement, which in the majority of traditional lecture-based classrooms does not exist.

Teaching grammar has traditionally been a cornerstone of language acquisition, but most researchers argue that traditional methods, such as memorization and explicit rule-based instruction, fail to provide students with the capacity to apply language in real-life situations (Stein & Graham, 2013). Flipped classrooms, nevertheless, offer a more engaging option by allowing students to practice grammar through meaningful contexts. Roach (2014) noted that flipped grammar lessons, combined with interactive drills, lead to better retention and application of the rules of grammar, particularly if the learners can use these rules in conversation right away.

Speaking proficiency, a crucial aspect of language learning, is often underemphasized in traditional grammar instruction

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(Jaramillo & Jaramillo, 2017). Interactive speaking activities, such as role-playing, debates, and group discussions, create a context for students to practice grammar in authentic communication settings. According to Mazur (1997), peer interaction during speaking activities helps learners internalize grammar structures, while providing opportunities for feedback and correction. These activities foster both fluency and accuracy, making them an effective tool for language development in flipped classrooms.

The effectiveness of flipped classrooms in improving speaking proficiency has been widely documented. Freeman and Taylor (2015) argued that flipped classrooms provide more opportunities for students to apply grammar in context, thus improving their speaking skills. In a study by Jaramillo and Jaramillo (2017), students in flipped classrooms exhibited increased fluency and confidence in their speaking abilities, as they were able to engage in more interactive and collaborative activities. Additionally, Strayer (2012) found that flipped classrooms foster greater student motivation and engagement, leading to better speaking performance.

However, the implementation of flipped classrooms is not without challenges. McGivney (2016) highlighted the need for reliable technology and student motivation to engage with content outside the classroom. Furthermore, teachers must carefully design interactive activities that maximize the use of class time for active learning. If the activities are poorly structured or passive, the benefits of flipped learning may not be fully realized.

METHODS

Participants. The study involved 166 first-year students enrolled in English language and literature programs at three universities in Uzbekistan: Navoiy Pedagogical University, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, and Uzbekistan State World Languages University in Tashkent. The participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group (83 students), which engaged in flipped classroom activities, and the control group (83 students), which followed traditional teacher-led instruction.

Research Design. A mixed-methods research design was employed to assess the impact of flipped grammar lessons on speaking proficiency. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data, including pre-speaking and post-speaking assessments, interviews, and classroom observations.

Pre-Speaking and Post-Speaking Analysis. Pre-speaking and post-speaking assessments were conducted to measure students' speaking proficiency before and after the intervention. These assessments focused on fluency, accuracy, and complexity, with particular emphasis on the use of grammar in conversational contexts. The assessments were designed to provide a comprehensive measure of students' speaking abilities.

Intervention**.** The experimental group participated in flipped classroom classes, where they reviewed grammar content at home using instructional videos and reading materials. During class, the focus was on interactive speaking activities, such as role-playing, group discussions, and debates, allowing students to apply grammar in context. The control group, on the other hand, received traditional teacher-led grammar instruction, followed by individual exercises during class time.

Data Collection. Interviews: Structured interviews were conducted with both groups of students at the beginning and end of the semester to gather insights into their experiences with grammar instruction and their perceptions of the flipped classroom.
Observations: Classroom observations were conducted to assess the level of student engagement, participation, and interaction during grammar lessons and speaking activities.

Data Analysis. Quantitative data from the pre- and post-speaking tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests to identify significant differences between the two groups. Qualitative data from the interviews and observations were analyzed thematically to identify common themes related to student engagement, speaking proficiency, and the perceived effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach.

RESULTS

Pre-Speaking Test Scores. Before the intervention, both the experimental and control groups had similar speaking proficiency levels, with average pre-speaking test scores of 65% for the experimental group and 64% for the control group. These results indicated that both groups started with comparable levels of speaking proficiency.

Post-Speaking Test Scores. After the intervention, the experimental group showed a significant improvement in speaking proficiency. The average post-speaking test score for the experimental group showed a 16.25% increase from the pre-test score. In contrast, the control group showed a more modest improvement, with an average post-speaking test score of reflecting an 7,62 % increase.

Interview and Observation Findings. Interviews with students in the experimental group revealed positive feedback regarding the flipped classroom approach. Students reported feeling more engaged and confident in their speaking abilities, as the interactive activities allowed them to practice grammar in real-life contexts. Classroom observations also indicated that students in the experimental group were more active and collaborative during speaking activities, while students in the control group were less engaged and tended to work more independently.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that flipped classroom techniques, particularly those involving interactive speaking activities, can significantly improve speaking proficiency in language learners. The experimental group demonstrated a notable improvement in speaking performance

The success of the flipped classroom model in this study may be attributed to its focus on active, student-centered learning.

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By engaging with grammar content outside the classroom, students in the experimental group had more opportunities to practice speaking during class time, thereby reinforcing their grammar knowledge through real-world application.

Moreover, the results highlight the importance of interactive activities in promoting speaking proficiency. Students in the experimental group were able to engage in peer interaction, receive immediate feedback, and collaborate in meaningful ways.

Table 1. Types of activities and their benefits in Flipped classes in grammar lessons

Activities	***Results***
Before the class (online/pre-class) *- Familiarize with materials in video, audio, ppt, pdf formats related to the new topic* *- Complete a low-difficulty task* *- Formulate questions regarding unclear parts*	**Before the class (online/pre-class)** - Develops independent learning skills - Provides various formats of learning materials (ppt, pdf, video, audio) - Enhances critical thinking - Saves significant time for the lecture in-class - Allows more time for speaking tasks in class - Reduces stress
Offline (in-class) lesson *- Discuss students' questions regarding the new topic* *- Have discussions in small groups* *- Presentations* *- Provide feedback* *- Spend more time on practical exercises than usual* *- Provide individual assistance to students who are falling behind*	**Offline (in-class) lesson** - Students teach each other and exchange ideas - Focus on both fluency and accuracy in speaking - Deeper exploration of the topic - Time for each student to speak is allocated - Sufficient time to work on pronunciation and lexical errors individually

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the effectiveness of flipped classroom techniques in improving speaking proficiency among first-year English language students. The experimental group, which engaged in flipped grammar lessons and interactive speaking activities, showed a significant improvement in speaking performance compared to the control group. These results suggest that flipped classrooms can provide a more dynamic and engaging learning environment, where students are able to apply grammar in context and enhance their speaking skills. Future research could explore the long-term effects of flipped classrooms on language acquisition and investigate the specific types of interactive activities that contribute to improved speaking proficiency.

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