

A Review of Flipped Classroom in Senior English Reading Teaching in China

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Abstract

Flipped or inverted classroom has been a new trend in the education world. It has a wide theoretical and practical foundation in foreign countries, and gradually emerged in the teaching field in China in recent years. This paper reviews the application of the flipped classroom model in China and summarizes the current situation of the application of the flipped classroom model in senior English reading teaching in China, hoping to provide reference for a more reasonable and effective application of the flipped classroom model in senior English reading teaching. This systematic literature review comprehensively analyzed 20 articles from CNKI in 2017 to 2021. Findings indicate that flipped classroom approach brings benefits to the English reading teaching and learning. However, some challenges are also encountered in the process of implementing flipped classroom.

Keywords

Flipped Classroom Approach; Senior English Reading; China; Systematic Review.

1. Introduction

One of the concerns that educators have in today's classroom is the attitudes of the learners. They are unwilling to participate in the discussion, shy to give opinions and timid to try new things. These passive learners have low ability in problem-solving and they are very dependent towards the teachers, or their peers with advanced proficiency level. The traditional teaching and learning method do not allow the learners to have time in discussing their lesson. The teachers act as information providers by providing a lot of input and the learners gradually became passive learners. There is insufficient time for any discussion to take place in the traditional classroom. Farrah & Qawasmeh (2018) stated, the dependency of learners due to the traditional teaching and learning approach requires the need of converting the old methods to modern teaching strategies. And flipped classroom is just one of the modern learners-centered strategies.

Flipped Classroom approach has been receiving mass attention all over the world as it is focusing on the learner-centered learning. With Flipped Classroom approach, we hope to produce active learners among the young generation. When the learners are active, they play an active role in their own learning. They are dynamic learners, looking for new knowledge without depending on teachers. The theory of flipped learning is totally opposite from the conventional teaching and learning approach, as it flipped the traditional method. In a flipped or inverted classroom, the learners are provided with out-of-class materials where they read, study, and review them individually. Discussion, questioning session or collaboration works take place after that. This allowed the learners to know what they should be focusing on during the lesson and they may participate actively as they have the materials ready. A flipped classroom lets the learners to review the materials in their comfortable speed based on their competency level (Han, 2015). This is crucial for the learners who are slower readers compared to their peers. By flipping classroom, learners may do their learning at home before the teachers discuss about the topic in the classroom during the next session. The learners have time to

prepare themselves for the discussion as well. This scenario helps both learners and teachers to have adequate of time in discussing the topic and have in-depth understanding on the topics discussed.

Therefore, a systematic literature studies on the implementation of Flipped Classroom approach need to be done to understand more about the targeted approach. So, a systematic literature review is being carried out to further discuss the modern learners-centered approach. The main aim of this systematic review is to present a synthesis of empirical found in the past related studies on the execution of flipped classroom in English reading teaching, so that further studies and research in this area can be conducted.

2. Flipped Classroom Approach in China

Flipped classroom approach is a trend in foreign countries for a long time (Du, 2018). The objective of the approach is to overcome teaching and learning challenges contributed by time and place. According to Du (2018), flipped classroom is also known as inverted classroom, it flipped the traditional teacher-centered teaching mode. In flipped classroom, the learners are being provided with resources from their teachers so that they could perform the process of knowledge transfer before the class. According to Carhill-Poza (2019), flipped learning allows language teachers to focus on interaction and socialization in the classroom while providing more learning opportunities outside the classroom. They may search for more information on the internet, or they may watch videos or listen to the audio prepared by the teachers. Then, when in the classroom, they can have a complete discussion on the topics as the teachers do not have to give lectures about the topic anymore. The learners have gone through the materials beforehand. This is meaningful as it allows teachers to utilize class time for the learners to have discussion with their peers that time can be managed by learners to have more collaborative activities (Halili & Zainuddin, 2015; Yavuz & Ozdemir, 2019). In class, they will have questioning and answering (Q&A) session, group discussion, projects, problem-based learning, interactive exchanges, and other activities which are student-centered. The questions and doubts of students will be answered by teachers and serve as a guidance for the independent learning (Choe & Seong, 2016). Teachers play the role as facilitator and provides help when needed. So the learners have control over their learning progress while having maximum freedom of learning based on their competency, speed, and their cognitive level (Du, 2018; Yavuz & Ozdemir, 2019).

In Chinese context, the Ministry of Education has introduced the New English curriculum standards for senior high school (2017). Under the background of new curriculum reform, English teaching approach in senior high school has been changed with more attention paid to students' English reading ability and the cultivation of English practical skills. In traditional way of teaching, Chinese teachers often use the "indoctrination" teaching method. In this way, students are not motivated to learn and the efficiency of the classroom is very low, which cannot meet the requirements of the new curriculum reform for English teaching. Students' learning of English reading is not only to cope with the college entrance examination, but also plays an important role in students' future English learning and applying ability as it is a key part of the English teaching process. The shift of the curriculum standards focuses on the significance of information and communication technology (ICT). The government aimed to increase the use of ICT for distance and independent learning to develop high-quality teaching irrespective of location or students' competency level. This is in-line with the concept of blended learning, where flipped classroom or flipped learning is an element of blended learning (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). The blended learning approach is anticipated to increase the quality of the teaching and learning in China. There are quite a number of studies that have been done in China on the topic of flipped learning. In fulfilling the requirements of the globalization era,

Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), blended learning and digital technology have been unified with the Chinese education system. The flipped learning approach is starting to gain some position in the China education domain. From table 1, research on flipped classroom in English teaching in senior high school has increased immediately in 2017 and reached its highest peak in 2018. Until 2020, the heat on this topic has been decreased obviously. Looking back on the short history of flipped classroom in China, flip class has the potential to bring about great educational changes. In fact, its superiority has not been fully exerted and generalized in teaching. Implementation of flipped classroom is an innovation in the new teaching method in line with the current education system.

Table 1. Studies of Flipped Classroom in English Reading teaching in China

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of Articles	116	141	179	172	117	71

Despite the enhanced popularity of flipped classroom research, there is a lack of empirical evidence reported about the different impacts revealed by the implementation of this concept. Therefore, to respond to this issue, this study aims to review and analyze the trends and contents of flipped classroom research based on recently published studies in 2017 to 2021. This paper will start from a systematic perspective of the existing research in 2017-2021. Focusing the recent five years, it sorts out and analyzes the literature research on Flipped Classroom so as to understand the actual situation of Flipped Classroom development in China and provide a constructive theoretical basis for the development of Flipped Classroom in English reading teaching in China.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This review is constructed on systematic analysis on searched articles from CNKI. The present study investigated peer-reviewed scholarly articles published from 2017 to 2021.

3.2. Research Questions

The analysis of this study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) What are the positive impacts of flipped classroom implementation on English reading teaching?
- (2) What are the challenges encountered in flipped classroom implementation on English reading teaching?

3.3. Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The searched articles are written in Chinese language, published in 2017 to 2021 (carried out over the past five years). There were a few key terms used to search for the past related research articles in the above databases. The related terms were checked and the searches were polished and only related articles were being selected based on the research areas, document types, language used, and publication years. The title and abstract for these articles were screened through as well. In this review, books chapters are not being selected. The search was restricted to the full-text articles and journal articles. The database used in this review was China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). The articles selected were published between 2017 to 2021. The keywords used to search for the relevant studies were implementation of flipped classroom in senior English reading teaching.

The inclusion criteria are specified to pinpoint the articles that will be included or excluded for this review. Only the articles that match the inclusion criteria of the study were carefully chosen. The rationale behind this is to ensure that only relevant journal articles to be chosen as a part of this systematic review. This is important to avoid inclusion of irrelevant studies. The inclusion criteria:

- Experiments of Flipped Classroom approach in Chinese Senior English Reading teaching
- Teaching and learning English Language as second language or foreign language (ESL and EFL)
- Participants or respondents from senior high school
- Academic journal and articles on educational fields
- Published between year 2017 to 2021

Hence, after the screening of past research articles based on the criteria stated above, only 20 articles have met the inclusion criteria selected. Table 2 indicates the frequency of studies of flipped classroom in senior English reading teaching. In 2019, it reached to the highest about the implementing flipped classroom on the reading field in China.

Table 2. Studies of Flipped Classroom in English Reading teaching in China

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of Articles	2	3	8	5	2

4. Results and Findings

4.1. Positive Impacts of Flipped Classroom Implementation

In spite of the newest instruction and emerging pedagogy in twenty-first century learning, there is a growing body of literature that discusses the countless positive impacts of the flipped classroom research. Thus, this section reviews various impacts of flipped classroom studies, based on 20 selected empirical articles, published during 2017 to 2021. This analysis attempts to answer the first research question, "What are the positive impacts of a flipped classroom implementation on English reading teaching?" Four major themes emerge based on the review of 20 empirical articles, namely, students' academic achievement, learning motivation and/or engagement, self-directed learning skills and social interaction.

In terms of learning achievement, reports from some recent studies reveal that the implementation of flipped classroom instruction across diverse subject domains reveals a statistically significant increase in students' learning outcomes. For instance, the comparison on reading test scores between control class and experimental class under flipped classroom approach show that this new teaching model is conducive to increase reading test scores. (Hao Qiaona, 2018; Sun Qiaoyuan, 2018; Li Jing, 2019) A study of Zheng Lilan (2017) reported that students in the flipped classroom finished the tasks more completely than students in the traditional classroom. It shows that attracted by the innovation of teaching mode and micro-learning videos, students are changing from passive learners to active learners under the guidance of teachers. Lin Anpeng (2021) also implemented flipped classroom instruction in senior English reading and the result found that the flipped classroom model can raise high school students' awareness of applying English reading strategies and lead to a statistically significant increase in learning outcomes of students. Others studies also reported positive impacts of learning academic performance in flipped classroom implementation. For instance, flipped classroom approach can make high school students with different English levels improve in their English reading. (Wei Zhaoxia, 2020) After a half semester's experimental research, Cheng qianqian (2019) found that not only reading efficiency, but also the capacity of memorizing vocabulary and focusing on class are promoted. In addition, some studies merged

flipped class-instruction with another emerging digital technology. Xue Yuqing(2019) integrated Wechat into the flipped-class teaching. The results of this study indicate that flipped classroom based on Wechat exerted a positive impact on pre-class learning outcomes and that students performed better overall learning outcomes than their lecture-based peers.

As for learning motivation, a study by Wang Liqi(2021) reveals that the flipped classroom model has positively resulted in students' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy learning skills. These positive impacts are subsequently followed by students' positive learning achievement. This teaching model can encourage students to take an active part in teaching activities. With rich teaching resources, the flipped classroom makes students interested in English reading. Students are no longer passively receiving knowledge, but are able to actively find problems, ask questions, discuss and solve problems. Students' self-determined motivation in the flipped classroom implementation was discovered in many articles analyzed in this study. (Wang Lanli, 2020; Wang Miao, 2020; Cao, 2020; Wang Liqi, 2021)

Some studies also reveal the positive impact of flipped classroom instruction, namely, students' self-efficacy. The value of technology and digital tools in the flipped classroom has enhanced self-regulated strategies in class and out of class (Zhang Xiaoya, 2018). Zhang Jiayue(2019) did a experiment between two class with one of them under flipped classroom teaching model and another under control. The experimental results show that flipped classroom model reduced students' English reading anxiety of examination in senior high school. Zhang Xiaochen(2019) combined multimedia with flipped class and the combination of the two brought into full play the advantages of digital media technology. In the multimodal flipped class, students can master and use more English reading strategy.

Other studies have also reported positive impacts on students' collaboration and interaction with peers and instructors. Students like to study in cooperation with other students and enjoy the atmosphere of cooperative learning. With sufficient discussion time, the flipped classroom increases collaboration among students, and student-to-student talk increased as compared to their prior non-flipped teaching(Wang Lixue, 2020).

All positive themes, such as learning achievement, motivation, engagement, self-directed learning skills and social interaction are related and have influenced each other. For instance, through teacher-student interactions, the learners would learn better about the process of self-awareness and the quality of learning outcomes become positive and improved.

4.2. Challenges of Implementing Flipped Classrooms

This section attempts to answer the second research question "What are the challenges encountered in a flipped classroom implementation on English reading teaching?" This analysis reports that not all flipped classroom implementations result in positive learning outcomes. A few studies assert that flipped-class instruction has no significant effects on students' learning as compared to conventional instruction in some way. Wu Shuming(2019) pointed out that there is no significant difference in the respects of "reasoning judgment", "main idea", and "meaning guess" such specific question types.

Moreover, flipped classroom can cause problems in English teaching teaching sometimes. Zhao Yan(2019) discovered that this model distract students' attention, making them addicted to mobile phones or computers and unable to concentrate on their study. Hu Yueying(2019) noticed that changing the instruction without good preparation can cause confusion and stress among students and teachers. For example, during the discussion time, it is hard to control some students if they are overreacted so that the class will be in chaos and teachers have difficulty in class management. Some problems exist in the process of conducting flipped classroom. (Li Ling, 2017) For example, for lack of autonomous ability, some students are not well-prepared before class. Some areas lack of mature facility for carrying on flipped classroom.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Work

In conclusion, the review on the 20 articles about the implementation of flipped classroom chosen showed positive and negative effects on English reading teaching. In terms of positive impacts, four major themes emerged based on the review of empirical articles, namely, students' learning achievement, learning motivation and/or engagement, self-efficacy and social interaction. The teachers and learners perceived that the approach helped in the teaching and learning English reading process as it provided more discussion opportunities and better time management. However, flipped classroom is a modern teaching and learning approach which is not fully implemented yet in China. Thus, there is room for improvement in the future of flipped classroom research. Despite the limitations in the implementation of flipped classroom, flipped classroom is still widely applied. To implement the flipped classroom approach, challenges should be overcome. Teachers and learners should better be technology literate. Educators and learners need to upgrade themselves to be able to apply the flipped classroom in their teaching and learning process. Flipped classroom approach could build autonomous learning ability and it could help the learners and teachers.

Based on the review, flipped learning is an effective approach and shall be implemented by most of the learning institutions. This systematic literature review is expected to provide guidance for future researchers who wish to conduct studies about the flipped classroom in English reading teaching. Besides, teachers or instructors who wish to change their teaching method from a traditional classroom to a flipped classroom should be able to gather information from this systematic literature review on the benefits of flipped classroom before starting the intended method.

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