STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL APPLIED TO ADVANCED ENGLISH READING: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH MAJORS AT THAI BINH DUONG UNIVERSITY

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Abstract - Self-study is considered one of the indispensable skills of learners in general and university students in particular in the 4.0 technology era. In order to develop the spirit of active inquiry, knowledge acquisition, and a flexible learning environment, this study examined the application of the flipped classroom model for an academic Advanced Reading course for students majoring in English. It aimed to find out the factors affecting students' awareness and understanding of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the flipped model for this subject. Research results collected through indepth interviews with 15 students showed that there were many positive responses to this model and pointed out the limitations of the model for Advanced Reading, suggesting how teachers can develop more effective teaching methods in this area.

Keywords: advanced reading, case study, flipped classroom.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the fundamental English abilities that students should master since it will help them study more information, discover more facts, and enjoy more things. According to Nation [1], reading is regarded as the primary source of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) information that can assist students improve their knowledge and discourse structure. The fundamental element of comprehension is the interplay between the

comprehension would not be able to comprehend the information in the text. Therefore, reading comprehension is a key component enabling learners to learn more and improve their reading skills.

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reader's past knowledge and understanding of the

knowledge from the text since reading without

One thing that teachers frequently do to make learning activities more active and creative is to implement new learning models. More recently, COVID-19 has had an impact on teaching and learning in almost every higher education institution, especially by reducing face-to-face classroom instruction in favor of distance learning. Currently, online learning is being used to encourage teachers and students to adopt current e-learning strategies.

Using learning technologies like Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Edmodo and Moodle is one way that institutions can manage online classes. By giving students the freedom to design their learning and have access to a larger variety of learning possibilities, it is feasible to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Besides, for students to learn a foreign language and advance their skills under the direction of teachers, self-study is equally crucial.

The flipped classroom (FC) model may be suitable for implementing student-centered learning in online environments. The flipped classroom is a teaching method that flips the usual learning setting. Students are introduced to instructional content outside the classroom, generally via video lectures or online resources, and class time is devoted to interactive activities,

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discussions, and problem-solving. The flipped classroom's fundamental elements are active learning, student-centered instruction, technological integration. Hence, it may solves the issue of a classroom that is too theoretical and doesn't allow for enough practice or contact between teachers and students. Valuable class time is used for more useful activities, including assignment support, when students take a more proactive approach with self-study at home and learning by doing in the classroom. According to Basal [2], the most notable benefits of the flipped model are the increased in-class time allocated to dealing with complicated knowledge concepts, having more engaged talks, or doing more activities. In addition, because technology is developing quickly and providing our young people with a variety of Internet-connected devices, instructors now have the tools they need to easily flip their classrooms. In other words, compared to the typical course environment, the FC seems to be better adapted to present learners. So, an expected tendency in education is a gradual shift toward new technology-based techniques like FC. Regarding the use of technology, Francl [3] said that FC, with their recorded lectures readily accessible at any time and from any location, might successfully outperform other technological distractions in the race for students' attention.

In this study, the FC concept was used in the learning and teaching process as an innovation to replace traditional lectures in an advanced English reading class for second-year students majoring in English at Thai Binh Duong University. The study hoped to learn more about how students view the effectiveness of this model from their experiences. The exploration was guided by the following questions:

- 1. What are the experiences of the students who took the Advanced English Reading course?
- 2. What are the factors that contribute to the students' perception on the effectiveness of the FC approach in the Advanced English Reading?

In general, the flipped classroom approach demonstrates that it contains a useful effect on students' execution and capability levels in English dialect aptitudes. For example, Hung [4] pointed out that the flipped instructing approach in English classes upgrades students' common scholastic performance. Although this technique is popular, there doesn't appear to be much thorough study on the students' perception of the effectiveness of this model, particularly on the four critical language learning abilities of writing, listening, reading, and speaking [5].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The flipped classroom

Although the flipped classroom can provide an innovative educational environment, the concept is not entirely new. Teachers often assign readings to their students as a preparatory homework assignment so that they would have some prior knowledge for future class discussion. Therefore, it is possible to think of this method of teaching reading as an inverted classroom. With conventional learning, students come to class, learn with teachers and new material through knowledge transfer activities, and then practice doing homework at home. Conversely, with flipped learning, practice activities traditionally completed at home are done within the classroom, while knowledge transfer activities which are traditionally done during course time are given as homework through preparatory video lectures, assignments and readings. By moving knowledge transfer activities online, more lesson time is available for dynamic learning-bydoing activities. Like previous novel pedagogical techniques, the flipped classroom received positive and negative comments from educational professionals and educators. The struggle between supporters and opponents has sparked a heated debate in the literature, motivating greater research on the topic. While some researchers suggest that the flipped classroom has positive benefits, others argue the contrary, with worse or no difference in learning outcomes detected.

To begin with, the flipped classroom approach offers various benefits that have been recognized by analysts around the world. One of the essential points of interest is expanded student engagement. A study by Lage et al. [6] found that students in a flipped classroom detailed higher levels of engagement and dynamic interest in course dialogs compared to those in a traditional lecturebased classroom. Additionally, Strayer [7] conducted a study in a college variable-based math course and found that students within the flipped classroom were more committed and illustrated a more profound understanding of the material. The flipped classroom also permits more personalized learning encounters. According to a review by Hew et al. [8], students in a flipped classroom can advance at their own pace and get individualized support from the teachers. Furthermore, the flipped classroom improves understanding, critical thinking and application. McLaughlin et al. [9] found that students in a flipped classroom illustrated higher levels of basic understanding in their composition assignments. The dynamic learning and problem-solving exercises during inclass sessions cultivated a more profound understanding of information and how it can be applied. The benefits of the flipped classroom approach include increased student engagement [6, 7], personalized learning experiences [8], and enhanced critical thinking skills [9].

Despite the numerous benefits, there are researchers who have raised concerns and opposition to the use of flipped classrooms. One of the main criticisms is the potential for increased student workload. Strayer [7] found that students in a flipped classroom reported spending more time outside of class engaging with pre-class materials, which some students may perceive as an additional burden. This increased workload can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and burning out, especially for students who are already juggling multiple responsibilities. Second, in a study by Abeysekera et al. [10], some students expressed frustration with the responsibility to be self-directed learners who must independently acquire knowledge outside of the classroom. They felt that the flipped classroom approach required a higher level of motivation, discipline, and time management skills, which not all students possess

equally. Another concern is the digital divide and access to technology. Researchers such as Gilboy et al. [11] have highlighted that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may lack access to the necessary technology or reliable internet, which can create inequities in learning opportunities. This issue can exacerbate existing educational disparities among students. Furthermore, Burton, as cited in Taylor [12], stated that the time and effort required to create materials such as presentations or videos can be labor intensive and onerous for teachers. Clearly, technical difficulties, insufficient training, or lack of resources can hinder the successful implementation of the flipped classroom model. These concerns and criticisms highlight the importance of addressing workload balance, providing support for selfdirected learning, ensuring equitable access to technology, and offering adequate training and resources for instructors.

Overall, the flipped classroom model has the potential to revolutionize traditional teaching methods, fostering active learning, personalized instruction, and critical thinking skills. However, it is essential to consider the concerns and oppositions raised, working towards solutions that promote equitable and effective implementation of the flipped classroom approach.

B. Advanced Reading

Reading is the foremost critical activity in any language lesson. Reading serves as a way to expand and consolidate one's language skills in addition to being an enjoyable hobby and a source of information. Reading is also crucial for gaining knowledge of other cultures, broadening the mind, and understanding how other people think and communicate in different languages. Clearly, reading is undoubtedly a necessary practice for enhancing linguistic proficiency.

Advanced Reading is a subject that aims to develop higher-level reading skills beyond basic comprehension. These skills include critical reading, analytical thinking, and the ability to evaluate and synthesize information from various sources. One important aspect of advanced reading is the

use of reading strategies. According to research conducted by Brown et al. [13], skilled readers use a variety of strategies to comprehend and analyze texts. These strategies include predicting, clarifying, questioning, summarizing, and evaluating. In addition, good readers are able to adjust their strategies based on the type of text they are reading and their purpose for reading.

Another key concept in advanced reading is reading fluency. Fluency refers to the ability to read smoothly, quickly, and with appropriate expression. Research has shown that fluent reading is important for both comprehension and enjoyment of reading [14]. To help students gain familiarity with different books while perusing, it is critical to supply them with openings to read a wide assortment of writings at their reading level.

In addition to reading strategies and fluency, advanced reading also involves the ability to analyze and interpret texts. According to the National Reading Panel [15], comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading, and it involves the integration of three key components: decoding, vocabulary, and background knowledge. Advanced readers are able to use their knowledge of these components to analyze and interpret texts in a deeper and more meaningful way.

In conclusion, advanced reading is an important subject that involves the development of higher-level reading skills, such as reading strategies, fluency, analysis, and interpretation. To develop these skills, it is important to provide students with a variety of texts and opportunities to interact with texts in different ways. By doing so, students can become more effective and confident readers who are better prepared for academic and professional tasks.

C. Case study research

Case study research is usually connected with qualitative research and plays a significant role in investigating complicated matters in real and specific circumstances and contexts. This technique has been used in a range of studies, particularly in the social and life sciences. With a long-standing history, it more than one definition and can be defined as 'an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units' [16]. MacDonald et al. [17] further described case study as 'the study of the instance in action', and Yin [18] described it as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within the real-life context.' In general, the case study approach is suitable for finding the answers to 'how' and 'why' questions, and as Suryani [19] noted, the subject matter of the study can be basic or complicated and focus on a single case or a group of similar cases.

During the research process of the case study method, many different methods of data collection can be used, but methods critically depend on the researcher's competence [20]. During interviews, for example, the researcher needs to have the capability to ask good questions and understand and interpret the answers of the interviewees. Furthermore, data should be collected based on a protocol that describes the question sections during the interview process. Regarding the data analysis, Rowley [20] suggested that the researcher needs to use all appropriate documentation, evaluate all of the vital interpretations, and utilize expert knowledge in the area of the case study without bias or subjectivity.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research design

Qualitative research provides an understanding of a circumstance or wonder that tells the story instead of deciding cause and impact [21]. It is a methodical approach that seeks to understand and interpret the complexities of human experiences, behaviors, and perspectives. Unlike quantitative research that focuses on numerical data, qualitative research delves into the depth and context of phenomena through open-ended data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, and content analysis. By embracing the richness of narratives, qualitative research provides an opportunity to explore the intricacies of social phenomena, cultural dynamics, and individual viewpoints. Its strength lies in uncovering underlying meanings, generating theories, and shedding light on the 'how' and 'why' behind various phenomena. As a result, the qualitative research design chosen for this study included in-depth interviews with 15 students participating in the 'Advanced Reading' course offered by the English Department within the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Culture Studies at Thai Binh Duong University (TBDU) in the second term of the 2021 – 2022 academic year.

With the in-depth interview method, a cornerstone of qualitative research, a profound exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences takes place. In these one-on-one interactions, researchers engage in open-ended conversations that encourage participants to share detailed narratives and insights. By creating a comfortable and trusting environment, in-depth interviews unveil personal viewpoints, emotions, and contexts that quantitative methods might overlook. This method is particularly adept at uncovering underlying motivations, social dynamics, and cultural influences that shape participants' responses. Researchers meticulously analyze these rich narratives to extract themes, patterns, and meanings, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexities within the researched phenomenon.

B. Data collection

The information was collected using openended questions during face-to-face interviews at different locations on the TBDU campus, such as the library and the English Division office, or online via Zoom to suit the requirements and convenience of the participants. Discussions were recorded with the assurance that all the recordings would be stored by the researchers and not be distributed remotely.

Each interview took approximately 30 minutes for each participant to answer the questions. The interview began with the introduction of the interviewer on the personal information, the purpose of the study, the potential outcomes, and asking for the interviewee's permission to record

the interview. Formal organized interviews were conducted for each member independently at the start of the discussion. Unstructured follow-up questions were then asked based on information initially provided by participants, allowing more freedom for participants to respond in an unconstrained and honest way.

C. Data analysis

Information analysis could be a key component of subjective research. In the data analysis phase, the recorded interviews were translated verbatim, guaranteeing the precision of the translations. The next step included manually coding the transcripts employing a categorical approach. Researchers carefully examined through the transcripts and recognized repeating topics, concepts, or designs within the information. These subjects were assigned specific names that represented two catergories, 'positive experiences' and 'negative experiences'. This broad coding allowed for an initial exploration of the data and helped identify the main topics of interest. Following broad coding, researchers organized the data in accordance with each study question and combined the coded segments under each category to create an extensive dataset for each subject.

IV. FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the students' perception of the effectiveness of the FC approach in an Advanced English Reading class based on their own experiences as well as to propose some improvements to the flipped classroom method in teaching Advanced English Reading. This study's findings are divided into positive and negative student experiences.

A. Positive Experiences

Improved reading outcomes

One of the participants' positive experiences is that the flipped classroom helped them to understand course materials better than by using standard instruction. For instance, some participants reported that they improved reading proficiency and scanning techniques in the flipped classroom: 'I was able to memorize the course contents better with flipped classroom instruction than with conventional lecture-based one.' [22]

'I have learned how to develop an effective search strategy well in flipped classroom.' [23]

Improved use of class time

The students strongly favored the flipped learning model and valued the use of class time. The primary factors could be that they received more helpful comments and had more practice time as opposed to sitting through hour-long lectures. For example, participants stated:

'More time to practice, more individual help from the instructor.' [24]

'I like being able to discuss with my instructor during the course and get personal assistance when working on the assignment.' [25]

'I can get more valuable criticism from the instructor in flipped classroom than conventional one.' [26]

Appreciation of online materials

Students also appreciated the preparatory materials that were created by the teacher on Google Classroom. For instance, students reported:

'I think that the number of provided materials before class is sufficient to meet each other lesson's objective.' [27]

'Studying the given materials sometimes makes a difference and I feel more arranged and secure in class.' [28]

Preference for the flipped format

Participants also perceived that the flipped classroom approach is a flexible method, which proved to be a remarkable advantage of this approach:

'Suitable for when I can't go to school'; 'Additional knowledge when unable to attend the lesson.' [29]

'Students can have more time to find other materials from different sources on the Internet. Students can be active in learning, and they can prepare their lessons well.' [30]

'Improve students' self-study and enhance self-study skills.' [25]

'Students can develop their inherent abilities and take better control of their own learning.'

B. Negative Experiences

Technical Challenges

Some participants mentioned that they had no technology background, or they lacked adequate technological devices so they didn't feel pleased with the flipped approached:

'Many students have little technical background knowledge of computers'; 'Students who don't keep up with technology use won't keep up with their classmates.' [30]

Adding to the technical troubles, some students gave complaints on learning equipments.

'People without a device may have difficulty receiving documents, preparing and understanding the lessons well.' [32]

Time management burden

The flipped classroom was not considered relevant for the students who have little or no attitude of self-study outside the class. For instance, some students complained that:

'I need to do a lot of preparation before class.' [23]

'I feel tired of doing a lot of material research at home.' [27]

'I have searched for and read a lot of information in the books, on the internet, ... to be able to understand the lesson.' [33]

Inconsistent preparation

Based on researchers' observations, students' preparation varied, impacting the effectiveness of in-class discussions. Some felt unprepared due to time constraints or lack of motivation, leading to uneven participation and engagement.

Eye health issues

And finally, some students mentioned that viewing lecture videos affected their eyesight:

'Spend more time in front of the laptop, it is not useful for my eyes.' [26]

'Watching videos increases the time of using mobiles or laptops, so my eyes complain.' [28]

V. LIMITATIONS

Although this study's results provide insights for bettering the flipped classroom method in teaching English, several limitations in the study should be considered. First relates to limited generalizability, since the findings from a small sample of 15 students is not representative of the broader population or even of other undergraduate classes. The specific characteristics and dynamics of this particular class might skew the results. And second, subjectivity and bias may affect this study as the participants can introduce bias into the data collection process. The students' responses might be influenced by their perception of the interviewer's expectations or their desire to present themselves in a desired way.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of students' perception of the FC approach in an Advanced English Reading course. Participants had both positive and negative experiences, even though their experiences tended to be more positive. Students had more control in their learning and enhanced their self-study abilities, which is a critical skill for their personal development. Based on these findings, the FC model should be used for other subjects in which students have more time to do material research, practice, or engage in discussions, allowing for deeper learning.

Regarding negative experiences, the instruction should not only be via video. Diverse learning resources are necessary. Lecturers should provide a variety of learning resources, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive quizzes to cater to different learning styles and preferences. This can enhance engagement and accommodate students with varying levels of technological comfort. Handouts, textbooks, and research papers should be conducted and delivered to students before classes, which helps to reduce the time using mobiles or being in front of the screen. This also helps participants who do not have access to technology equipment or lack technical skills. Furthermore, not only lectures but also quizzes, animations, and music should be included in videos to engage students and enhance their selfstudy in Advanced English Reading.

Prior to using FC, teachers should provide workshops or seminars to help students develop effective time management skills. These workshops could provide strategies for balancing preclass readings, assignments, and other coursework, enabling students to navigate the demands of the flipped classroom more efficiently. Also, peer mentorship programs where experienced students guide newcomers through the flipped learning process need to be considered. Peer mentors can offer insights, share effective study techniques, and provide a supportive learning environment.

The research results also show that lecturers need to be equipped with more skills in designing video lectures and the activities of the flipped classroom model. Moreover, the institution or English Department needs to set up a team to support students with technical problems.

In addition, lecturers could emphasize the importance of consistent pre-class preparation to maximize the benefits of in-class discussions. Encouraging students to actively engage with the materials before class can lead to more productive and insightful group interactions.

Finally, future studies need to be conducted with a larger sample size, including more universities and colleges, to improve the diversity and generalizability of the study results and to make a more accurate assessment of the effectiveness of the FC model in teaching Advanced English Reading in particular and other subjects in general. Conducting longitudinal research to track the long-term impacts of the flipped classroom approach on students' learning outcomes and attitudes should also be considered, which can provide deeper insights into the sustained benefits and potential challenges over time.

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