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Research Paper

Exploring the Impact of Blended, Flipped, and Traditional Teaching Strategies for Teaching Grammar on Iranian EFL Learners' through English Newspaper Articles

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Abstract

Following the recent developments in educational technology-integrated learning, interest in the true implementation of flipped and blended classrooms as innovative approaches has become increasingly popular among language education authorities. This research aimed at comparing flipped, blended, and traditional teaching (T-learning) contexts on Iranian EFL learners' grammar learning. To this end, 60 intermediate EFL students out of 80, based on their performance in an Oxford Placement Test (OPT), were selected and divided into three groups, including two comparative and one control group, 20 in each. At the beginning of the study, the three groups participated in a pretest to assess their initial ability of grammar knowledge. To integrate technology into their instruction, both comparative groups received the same treatment and materials based on the Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition (SAMR) model. The blended comparative group received instruction in both on-line and T-learning contexts, while the flipped comparative group received instruction in an online context. The control group received instruction in a T-learning context. After the treatment sessions, they participated in a post-test. The findings showed that reading interesting English newspaper articles, both in the blended and flipped

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classrooms had a statistically significant effect on developing EFL learners' grammar knowledge. The findings of the study may be beneficial for EFL teachers and material developers to reconsider the role of educational technology (Ed Tech) tools to support classroom-based learning.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Educational Technology (Ed Tech), Newspapers, Flipped classroom, SAMR s

Today, there is a dawning awareness of the importance of second and foreign language (L2/FL) reading skills in higher education studies. Developing reading is instrumental to academic and professional success, especially for EFL learners, as it provides opportunities for them to be exposed to English in input-poor circumstances (Wu, 2014). Researchers believe that exposing EFL learners to authentic materials that are for native speakers (Crossley, Louwrese, McCarthy & McNamara, 2007) increases learners' motivation (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Marzban & Davaji, 2015). Also, for collegiate students who want to keep up with the latest developments in their fields of expertise, reading authentic texts can improve their language skills (e.g. Alijani, Maghsoudi & Madani, 2014; Alimorad, 2019; Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Ghanbari, Esmaili & Shamsaddini, 2015; Karimi & Dolatabadi, 2014), and increase their interactional involvement in the target activity more than artificial reading texts (Gilmore, 2007). Moreover, reading authentic materials helps EFL learners cope with the authentic language (Hedge, 2000), and keeps them informed about the target culture and situation (Akbari & Razavi, 2016). Since English is a lingua franca of the world, learning how to read authentic English passages improves learners' comprehension of foreign culture and values (Taghavi & Aladini, 2018), and encourages them to be independent when they face the language which is used for real-life purposes by native speakers (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Reading is an important activity in any English classroom in L2/FL contexts, not only as a source of scientific information and interesting activity but also as a vehicle for consolidating students' academic and professional skills through the medium of educational technology (Ed Tech) tools. With the development of technology, the quantity of authentic texts available in English has increased, which requires EFL learners to improve their reading ability to interact with different authentic materials (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Ed Tech-supported language teaching can facilitate the teaching and learning process and help EFL students' verbal communication in real-life arenas (Bhatt, 2020; Hermans, Tondeur, van Braak, & Valke, 2008).

The technological developments, including the Internet and Ed Tech-enhanced learning contexts in teaching and learning processes, have led to changes in learning forms from traditional classroom learning (T-learning) contexts to new forms of learning methods such as, blended, and flipped teaching/learning. Blended learning is a teaching strategy in which both T-learning contexts and on-line activities or E-learning contexts are combined (Akkoyunlu & Yilmaz Soylo, 2006). Flipped classrooms are new forms of blended learning which have inverted the traditional teaching format (Cleary, 2020). They also allow students to connect their traditional classes to online learning (Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2019). A fundamental assumption about flipped classrooms is that different Ed Tech tools are integrated into the teaching and learning process by using this technology (Hao, 2016). Flipped learning is a very simple example of an E-learning context, whereas blended learning is a combination of both online educational and T-learning teaching contexts (Kvashnina & Mrtynko, 2016).

With the increasing number of Ed Tech tools, it is essential to understand the supporting theoretical foundations of the flipped and blended classrooms. In both classes, the conventional teaching is reversed (Lai & Hwang, 2016).

The students practice the tailor-made materials and activities before class, discuss them with each other, and do the activities in the class under the surveillance of the teacher (Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Namaziandost & Çakmak, 2020). This way, a kind of schemata will be created in their mind about a particular topic (Alharabi, 2015), and then the schema will be activated during class time (Slomanson, 2014). Moreover, in these classes, teachers use more time for Ed Tech-based and in-class discussion, which helps students elucidate the ideas and reinforces collaboration (Ghazizadeh & Fatemipour, 2017). So, students learn not only through their own experiences, but also by the reciprocal sharing of their interactions with their peers (Boudreaux, Nikolaev, & Klein, 2019). This, according to the interactionist framework, facilitates language learning by the intersection of input and output through collaborative and meaningful interaction (Shekary & Tahririan, 2006).

Although it is evident that Ed Tech-supported language teaching has caught the attention of foreign language scholars around the world (e.g., Ekmekci, 2017; Lin & Hwang, 2018), the exploration of flipped, and blended teaching strategies in higher education classrooms is merely at its starting point. Furthermore, albeit the rich evidence of flipped instruction and its contribution to developing student' language skills (e.g., Al-Ghamdi & Al-Bargi, 2017; Karimi & Hamzavi, 2017; Vaezi, Afghari & Lotfi, 2019), there has been little investigation about the applicability of employing flipped and blended classrooms in online classes. Research has highlighted that grammar is the most challenging aspect of teaching to EFL learners (Akakura, 2012; Nazari, 2013; Rizwan & Akhtar, 2016; Soleimani, Jahangiri, & Jafarigozar, 2015; Sopin, 2015, inter alia). According to Nassaji and Fotos (2011), "nothing in the field of language pedagogy has been as controversial as the role of grammar teaching" (p. 1). Hence, there is a vital need to introduce novelties in teaching grammar to EFL students. Undoubtedly, one way out of

such a dilemma is the true application of Ed Tech tools (Seibert Hanson & Brown, 2020) in the process of teaching and learning grammar. Therefore, this study endeavored to broaden the use of Ed Tech-supported language teaching contexts such as flipped and blended classes on grammatical knowledge of EFL learners. As such, the central concern was to see to what extent the flipped, blended, and traditional classrooms succeed in teaching grammar through interesting English newspaper articles.

Literature Review

Since the emergence of Ed Tech tools in the education system, implementing flipped classes has caught the attention of EFL scholars around the world. As pointed out by some researchers, teaching through flipped classrooms is highly beneficial for EFL learners as it plays an important role in students' active participation and cooperation (Abdullah, Hussin, & Ismail, 2019; Ahuja, 2020; Mehring, 2016; Zainuddin & Attaran, 2016). Utilizing flipped classroom instruction also aids learners to improve their language skills. For example, in their studies, Ekmekci (2017), Lin and Hwang (2018), Ginting (2018), Mohammadi, Barati, and Youhanaee (2019), Qader and Yalcin Arslan (2019), Soltanpour and Valizadeh (2018), Vitanofa and Anwar (2018), Yang and Chen (2020) compared flipped classes to T-learning ones in English writing course. They state that applying flipped instruction motivates learners to develop their performance and enhances their involvement in-class activities. The flipped classroom is an effective arena for listening performance of EFL students, and defining an active role for them (Karabulut-Ilgü, Jaramillo Cherez, & Jähren, 2018; Vaezi et al., 2019). In effect, this technology is a facilitative method on EFL learners' reading ability, too (Abaeian & Samadi, 2016; Huang & Hong 2016; Karimi & Hamzavi, 2017). Besides, adopting a flipped classroom improves EFL students' grammar

knowledge through doing homework first, attending the online classroom at home, and doing activities in an online classroom context under the teacher's supervision (Saidah, 2019; Vuong, Keong & Wah, 2019; Yang, 2017). Researchers have also highlighted the usefulness of flipped EFL oral skills (Wang & Liu, 2018; Zuo, 2016) as well as pronunciation (Dixon, 2018; Yang & Chen, 2020; Zhang, Yuan & Zhang, 2016).

One of the major benefits of implementing a flipped-classroom approach is that it prepares students before attending their classes and helps them spend more time learning their course content (Musib, 2014; Wong & Chu, 2014; Zainuddin & Attaran, 2016). In flipped classes, the role of a teacher changes from being a dominant role to a facilitator of learning (Basal, 2015). In other words, it frees class time from teachers' lectures and allows students to use their classroom time effectively for their homework (Roehl, Reddy & Shannon, 2013). Furthermore, the flipped teaching model helps learners overcome undesirable learning outcomes of traditional teacher-centered instructions (LaFee, 2013). It increases students' interest and achievement of important concepts (Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Herreid & Schiller, 2013). It also promotes learners' peers' evaluations (McLean, Attardi, Faden & Goldszmidt, 2016). By implementing flipped instruction in EFL classes, learners can devote their class time to project-based learning (Alsowat, 2016) and take the responsibility for their outside-classroom activities (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). Teaching through flipped classes develops students' autonomy (Loucky & Ware, 2017), enhances their pragmatic competence, and engages them with the course contents (Haghighi, Jafarigohar, Khoshsima & Vahdany, 2019). Moreover, this teaching and learning method enhances learners' active-centered learning (Jeong, 2017), and their willingness to communicate (Hung, 2017). Studies also have shown that implementing flipped classrooms promotes students' higher-order thinking skills (Alsowat, 2016), and

motivates them to boost their confidence in their English skills (Webb & Doman, 2016). In effect, the organization of the flipped classroom technology can overcome undesirable learning outcomes of conventional language teaching methods (LaFee, 2013).

Numerous studies have compared the impact of flipped learning on students' achievement and attitudes in foreign language classes with traditional teacher-centered instruction. For example, Alastuey and Galar (2017), AlRowais, (2014), Basal (2015), Chivata and Oviedo (2018), Hung (2017), Jeong (2017), Harun and Hussin, (2017), Mehring (2016), Nouri (2016), Sung (2015), Wang and Liu (2018), Webb, Doman, and Pusey (2014) enquired students' perceptions toward using this teaching approach and found that flipped classes were more interesting than T-learning ones. They developed positive views about flipped learning despite the difficulties which they faced in using technology and adjusting themselves to it.

L2/FL scholars have adjusted conventional teaching methods to a new learning context called blended learning. For example, O'Toole and Absalom (2003) found that the learners who read online materials besides taking part in T-learning contexts had better performance than those who only depended on the in-class conventional lectures. Shang (2017) measured the influence of applying a blended method on the development of learners' writing performance and found that it played a significant role in developing their writing ability. Similarly, Ghahari and Ameri-Golestan (2014), Kazu and Demirkol (2014), Shih (2011), and Wang (2011) used the blended teaching strategy. Their results were in favor of the blended learning method. Soltani Tehrani, and Tabatabaei (2012), Khazaei and Dastjerdi (2011), and Tosun (2015) designed a research study to investigate the effect of the blended learning environment and traditional instruction on EFL learners' vocabulary learning. They concluded that the blended learning groups' performances

were superior to those who received traditional instruction. Likewise, Al-Jarf (2007), Ghazizadeh, and Fatemipour (2017) revealed that in the blended learning environment students' reading comprehension significantly improves due to using online instruction.

Nevertheless, some researchers are skeptical about adopting flipped classrooms. For instance, Carroll (2003), Suranakkharin (2017), Asaka, Shinozaki, and Yoshida (2018) doubt the effectiveness of the flipped classroom in promoting EFL learners' performances and attitudes toward learning English. In this aspect, Chuang, Weng, and Chen (2018), and Yang (2017) found contradictory results regarding the positive effects of implementing a flipped-classroom approach and reported that EFL students who had a positive and strong motivation in learning English benefited from the flipped classes.

With respect to the previous studies, and to the best of the present researchers' knowledge, few researchers have compared the effect of blended and flipped-teaching strategies on EFL learners compared with T-learning contexts. As such, the present study intends to fill the mentioned gap.

Method

The current research employed a convenience sampling method. The independent variable was teaching grammar through interesting newspaper articles in flipped, blended, and T-learning contexts, and the dependent variable was EFL learners' grammar knowledge.

Participants

Eighty university EFL learners participated in the current research. They were all doing an undergraduate degree in English Teaching at Mobarakeh Payam-e-Noor University. They took the four-credit obligatory lesson of Grammar in the first semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. To make sure

of the group homogeneity, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administrated to the students. Sixty students were the final participants with intermediate English language levels and were then randomly divided into three equal groups containing 20 learners namely control, flipped, and blended. The participants' age ranged between 18 and 35.

Instruments and Materials

The instruments used in the research were as follows:

OPT

The first instrument was an OPT, which helped the researchers to select a homogenous group of participants. It is the test of language proficiency presented by Oxford University Press, Local Examination Syndicate which provides tutors with a reliable and time-saving technique for determining the proficiency level of learners. It consists of 60 questions in three sections which measure the skills of listening, grammar, vocabulary, and reading. The students' mean score and standard deviation were 36.21 and 6.87, respectively. The researchers excluded students whose scores fell one standard deviation above or below the mean from the study. They were present in the classes, but their performances were not considered in the assessment measures or data analysis.

The Grammar Pre-Test

To evaluate the participants' knowledge of grammar before the treatment, the researchers from the course developed an intermediate grammar test with 20 multiple-choice items, which focused on English tenses from the prescribed materials (Appendix A). The total score of the pre-test was 20; each item was worth one point. Two EFL instructors confirmed the face and content validity of the test. The reliability of this grammar test was calculated through Cronbach's alpha and it was $r = 0.87$.

The Grammar Post-Test

After the completion of the treatment sessions, the researchers designed another grammar test about English tenses based on the students' designated course materials. It, also, included 20 multiple-choice questions. Following Bachman's (1990) model, the sequence of the questions in the post-test was jumbled to avoid the test practice effect. Regarding the validity and reliability of the post-test, the researchers followed the same process as for the grammar pre-test. The results showed 0.86 reliability. Two professional EFL instructors confirmed the content validity of the test.

Teaching Material

The main teaching material used in the present study was twelve articles selected from various newspapers (e.g., The New York Times, Newsday, Daily Mirror, Star Tribune, etc., Appendix B). The articles were from the life, entertainment, health, and food sections of the newspapers. Before conducting the study, the researchers showed some samples of the newspaper articles to the participants in the three groups, to check their interest in the topics. According to Lewis (2007), newspaper topics for language teaching should be according to the students' interests. Besides the newspaper articles, the researchers used audio, and video tracks of the students' course book entitled *Understanding and Using English Grammar* (Azar, Hagen, Tesh & Koch, 2017) and prepared twelve audio and video tracks, each focusing on one English tense.

Procedure

The selection of 60 homogenous EFL learners was the first step of this study. Then, they were randomly assigned to one of the three grammar classes that were scheduled. Two of the classes would receive treatment, and one would undergo regular grammar instruction according to the class syllabus. The flipped and blended treatment groups would receive instruction as

Formative groups (goformative.com) on the Internet. The three groups took the Grammar course with one of the researchers. The two comparative and the control groups received instruction on English tenses as part of their regular syllabus. However, the type of treatment each group received differed. To integrate technology into the teaching process, the activities of both comparative groups were paired with the Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition (SAMR) model (Puentedura, 2006). The teacher did her best to limit the differences between the groups to the treatment they received by keeping other sources of variability to a minimum. To this end, she used similar materials including news articles, audios, and videos during the course of instruction. Presenting specified tasks to the participants of the flipped, blended, and traditional classes happened in twelve sessions in 6 weeks. Every week, there were two sessions, and each treatment session lasted ninety minutes. The students took the pretest and the post-test before the first and after the last sessions of the course.

The flipped-group received instruction on English tenses based on their group membership. On the second day of their Grammar course, the Formative platform (<https://goformative.com/>) was used as a substitution for the T-learning context (the Substitution level). The teacher created a class code on the platform and added the participants of the flipped group. In the Augmentation level, as a substitute with the functional change, the teacher sent one article from one section (life, entertainment, health, and food) of selected online newspapers to the flipped group to study outside the class time.

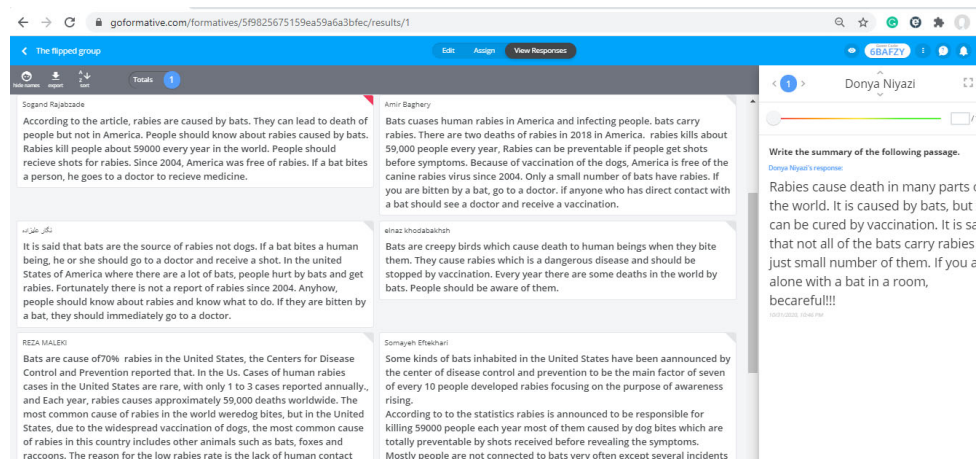
The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a news article. The browser's address bar shows the URL: goformative.com/formatives/5f9825675159ea59a6a3bfec. The article title is "Bats, Not Dogs, Are the Most Common Source of Rabies". Below the title is a sub-headline: "In the United States, if you get bitten by a bat, get rabies shots." There is a small image of a bat. The article text includes: "A western small-footed bat collected by researchers in a cave near Ely, Nev. Credit: Kim Raff for The New York Times". The main text states: "Bats are the main cause of human rabies in the United States and have been for several years, responsible for infecting seven of every 10 people who develop the disease, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported on Wednesday. Even though the actual number of rabies cases is very small, the C.D.C. made its announcement to raise awareness that bats carry rabies, said Dr. Emily Pieracci, a veterinarian with the agency. The United States has one to three reported human cases of rabies a year. There were two deaths in 2018, and none so far in 2019." Another paragraph says: "Worldwide, rabies kills about 59,000 people yearly, almost all of those from dog bites. Rabies is 100 percent preventable if a series of shots is received before symptoms start. The United States has been free of the canine rabies virus since 2004, because of extensive vaccination of dogs, but other variants are present in wildlife, particularly bats, foxes, skunks and raccoons." A final line reads: "People and bats fortunately don't come into contact all that often. But Dr. Pieracci said there

Figure 1.

A Sample of the News Article Sent to the Formative Group

To enrich the class, she resorted to such techniques as input flood, visual input enhancement, output enhancement, and negotiation. Regarding the input flood, the researcher sent plentiful examples of the specified English tenses to the group. She also prepared audio and video tracks of the chosen newspaper articles, each focusing on one tense, and sent them to the group. The students were required to listen to the audio and video tracks at home, focus on the designated grammar point, transcribe the audios for the following session, and share them with their group members. They read the assigned newspaper in each session and talked about the grammar and gist of the selected article. They shared and discussed what they understood from the text with each other. In case one had a question, the others would cooperate to find the proper answer or explanation. Besides, the teacher would play the audio and video tracks on the line, and check the participants' transcriptions for

possible inaccuracies. In the Modification level as a tool for redesigning tasks, the students were asked to embed visual input enhancement techniques into the audio scripts by highlighting, color-coding, and font manipulation. The teacher used this technique to highlight the designated tenses and draw the students' attention to them. The students collaborated online and shared their activities with their peers and teacher in the formative group. In the Redefinition level as a tool for creating new tasks, the participants of the flipped group wrote paragraphs about the selected news article and shared



their paragraphs publicly with others.

Figure 2.

A Sample of the Participants' paragraphs on the Classroom Dashboard

Finally, the teacher conducted an interactive session by reading all the students' paragraphs and giving feedback on their grammar errors.

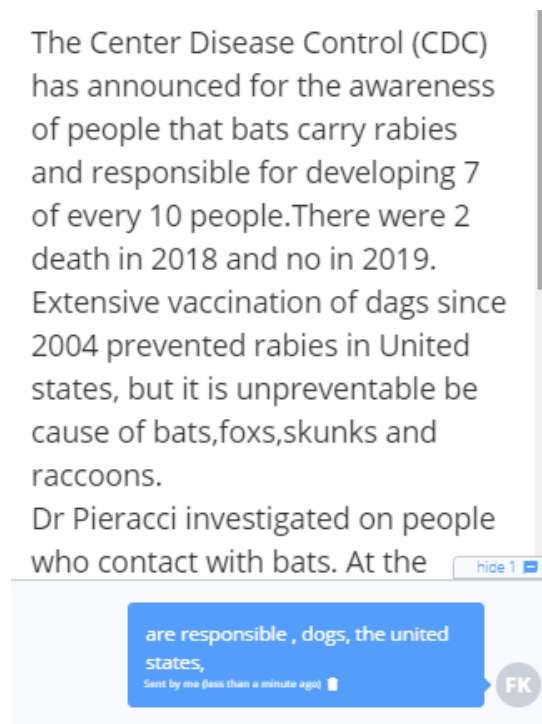


Figure 3.

A Sample of the Teacher's Feedback on one of the Participants' Writing

The students would receive a summary task to encourage them to write about the topic and motivate them to use the designated grammar of the selected article.

	Activities before the online class	Activities within the online class
Weekly instruction of the Flipped group	1 st activity Sending short instructive videos about grammar tenses to the group	1 st activity Asking the participants about the designated tense
	2 nd activity Sending articles to the group	2 rd activity Asking the participants about the article
		3 rd activity Asking them to write a summary about the article and send it to the group
		4 th activity Feedback and consolidation
		5 th activity Task-based group activity
		6 th activity Assigning homework

Figure 4.

The Weekly Instruction of the Flipped Group

The students in the blended group received instruction both in the E-learning context and in the T-learning class. The teacher used the same instruction applied for the flipped group to the blended group. She created a formative group (the Substitution level) and added the members to the group. Before the first session, the participants received one pre-selected newspaper, plenty of examples of the specified English tenses, and audio and video tracks of the chosen newspaper article (the Augmentation level). The instruction of the blended group was not limited to their cooperation and communicative activities in the E-learning class. During the class time in the T-learning class, the researcher asked the participants to work two by two in pairs and present

their summary of the designated news article, study the material, and talk about the grammar and the gist of the selected article in the class. Besides, embedding visual input enhancement techniques into the audio scripts (Modification level), writing paragraphs about the selected news article (Redefinition level), and giving feedback with the assistance of the teacher and the classmates were parts of the classroom activities.

	Activities before the online class	Activities within the traditional class
Weekly instruction of the Blended group	1 st activity Sending short instructive videos about grammar tenses to the group	1 st activity Asking the participants about the designated tense
	2 nd activity Sending articles to the group	2 nd activity Asking the participants about the article
		3 rd activity Asking them to write a summary about the article and share it
		4 th activity Feedback and consolidation
		5 th activity Task-based group activity
		6 th activity Assigning homework

Figure 5.

The Weekly Instruction of the Blended Group

The participants in the control group (T-learning context) received the same instruction on English tenses in the T-learning context; they received the news articles, video, and audio tracks like the students of the comparative groups. The researcher also used different input enhancement techniques to help the students notice the intended tense and asked them to produce

meaningful output that contained the designated tense. Each session, the participants were asked to read the papers and talk about the grammar and the gist of the article in the class. At the end of each session, they would review the news article and write a paragraph about its topic. Each session, the instructor spent time reading and giving feedback on the students' paragraphs with a focus on the designated grammar points.

	Activities of the control group
Weekly instruction of the Traditional group	1 st activity Instruction on grammar tenses
	2 nd activity Task-based group activity
	3 rd activity Asking the participants to read the assigned news article
	4 rd activity Task-based group activity
	5 th activity Feedback and consolidation
	6 th activity Assigning homework

Figure 6.

The Weekly Instruction of the Traditional Group

Results

After the required data were collected, they were analyzed using paired sample T-test, One-way ANOVA, Post-Hoc Scheffe's tests, and assumptions

of normality. Table 1 illustrates the results of the normality and distribution of the variables.

Table 1.
Results of Data Normality: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Control-pre	20	10.0	20.0	15.65	2.7	-.169	.512	-.430	.992
Control-post	20	11.0	20.0	15.80	2.8	.238	.512	-.942	.992
Flipped-Pre	20	10.0	20.0	14.67	2.8	.059	.512	-.581	.992
Flipped-Post	20	13.0	20.0	16.55	2.2	.261	.512	-.932	.992
Blended-Pre	20	11.0	20.0	13.87	2.5	1.181	.512	.983	.992
Blended-Post	20	12.5	20.0	15.30	2.2	.811	.512	-.006	.992
Valid N (listwise)	20								

According to Table 1 which presents the results of the descriptive statistics of the pre and post-tests of the three groups, the reported Skewness, and kurtosis values were all within the range of (+2), so the distributions were normal.

In order to define the probable changes in the groups, we ran a paired sample *t*-test. Tables 2 and 3 show the results for the control group.

Table 2.

Paired Sample T-test Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Control-pre	15.65	20	2.78	.62
	Control-post	15.96	20	2.82	.63

According to the results of Table 3, there was no significant difference between the two measures of the pre-test ($M = 15.65$) and post-test scores ($M = 15.96$) of the control group. In order to make sure that the difference in the mean scores of the control group was statistically significant, the statistical paired t-test was run.

Table 3.

Results of the Control Group Paired Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Control pre control post	-.150	1.02	.229	-.630	.33	-.65	19	.52

According to Table 3, there is not a significant within-group change in the control group ($t_{(19)} = -.65$, $p = .52$). In addition, the upper and lower band show that there was not a change in the mean of the control group's pre and post-test results.

Tables 4 and 5 delineate the results of the first experimental group that received flipped-teaching instruction.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics of the Flipped Group: Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Flipped-Pre	14.67	20	2.82	.63
	Flipped-Post	16.55	20	2.29	.51

Table 4 shows that the mean score of the flipped group changed from 14.67 to 16.55. Table 5 presents the paired sample t-test results.

Table 5.

Paired Sample T-test Results

Pair		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
1	Flipped-Pre flipped-Post	-1.87	1.13	.25	-2.4	-1.34	-7.3	19	.000

Table 5 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test (M=14.65, SD=2.82) and the post-test (M=16.55, SD=2.29) scores of the flipped group; $t_{(19)}=-7.3$, $p=.000$.

Tables 6 and 7 show the results of the paired test for the blended group.

Table 6.

Descriptive Statistics for the Blended Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Blended-Pre	13.87	20	2.50	.55
	Blended-Post	15.30	20	2.25	.50

According to the above table, the mean score of the blended group increased from 13.87 to 15.30, which shows that the treatment had an impact on this group. Table 7 shows the results of the paired test for the blended group.

Table 7.
Paired Samples Test

			Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper				
Pair 1	Blended Pre	Blended Post	-1.42	.96	.21	-1.87	-.97	-6.6	19	.000

Table 7 shows that there is a significant difference between the pre and post-test scores of the blended group ($t_{(19)} = -6.6$, $p = .000$). Moreover, the difference between the upper and lower band implied that the blended group benefited from the treatment and it had a positive effect on their posttest results.

To find out the difference between the mean scores of the three groups, a one-way ANOVA was used, whose results appear in Table 8.

Table 8.
Results of ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	84.4	2	42.2	11.864	.000
Within Groups	202.7	57	3.55		
Total	287.1	59			

Table 8 shows the mean square between groups and within groups were 42.2, 3.55 respectively and the mean difference was significant at 0.05 alpha level.

Table 9 presents the results of the post hoc to define the differences between the groups. As the number of the groups was small, the Scheffe test was applied.

Table 9.

Results of Scheffe: Multiple Comparisons

Scheffe						
(I) learners	(J) learners	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	flipped	-2.87*	.596	.000	-4.3	-1.3
	blended	-1.07	.596	.020	-2.5	.42
Flipped	control	2.87*	.596	.000	1.3	4.3
	blended	1.80*	.596	.125	.30	3.2
Blended	control	1.075	.596	.206	-.42	2.5
	flipped	-1.80*	.596	.125	-3.2	-.30

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The analysis of ANOVA indicated that the difference between the means of the three groups was significant at the 0.05 alpha level. The sig. value of the control and the flipped groups showed that the difference was significant at the 0.05 alpha level. This can imply that the first group that received the flipped instruction outperformed the control group in the post-test. In addition, the sig. values of the blended and control groups were significant at the 0.05 alpha level (sig=0.02), which implies that the second comparative group outperformed the control group in the post-test. On the other hand, the relation between the flipped and the blended groups was not significant at the 0.05

alpha level, which shows that there was not a significant difference between them in the post-test.

Discussion

Considering the comparative analysis of the flipped and blended teaching strategies, the results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the positive impacts of the two teaching strategies. The participants of both comparative groups obtained significantly higher means, as compared with the control group participants. Concerning the evaluation of the flipped and blended teaching strategies on improving EFL learners' grammar, the results revealed that both teaching strategies had a significantly positive impact on improving the participants learning' grammar. The results of this research are in line with the findings of many previous research studies (e.g., Abaeian & Samadi, 2016; Al-Jarf, 2007; Ekmekci, 2017; Ghahari & Ameri-Golestan, 2014; Ghazizadeh & Fatemipour, 2017; Ginting, 2018; Huang & Hong, 2016; Karabulut-Ilgu et al., 2018; Karimi & Hamzavi, 2017; Kazu & Demirkol, 2014; Khazaei & Dastjerdi, 2011; Mohammadi et al., 2019; Qader & Yalcin Arslan, 2019; Shih, 2011; Soltani Tehrani et al., 2012; Soltanpour & Valizadeh, 2018; Tosun, 2015; Vaezi et al., 2019; Vuong et al., 2019; Wang, 2011; & Yang, 2017), that contend the students who receive instruction in flipped and blended contexts outperform those who do not.

The results of the current research revealed the potential of the flipped and blended teaching contexts for the comparative participants' grammar improvement, such as preparing them outside of class time so they could spend inside of the class time for interacting and cooperating with their teacher and peers and developing their engagement in the class (Abdullah et al., 2019; Al-Ghamdi & Al-Bargi, 2017; Hung, 2017 & Mehring, 2016). The flipped and blended teaching strategies change classes from teacher-centered

instruction to student-centered learning contexts (Jeong, 2015) that require learners' active participation. Moreover, Ed Tech-mediated instructional-learning contexts such as the use of the Formative platform in the present study were a facilitative method on the participants' reading ability too (Abaeian & Samadi, 2016; Huang & Hong, 2016; Karimi & Hamzavi, 2017). Ed Tech-supported language teaching can facilitate the teaching and learning process and help EFL students do comprehension well in real-life arenas (Bhatt, 2020; Hermans et al., 2008). The participants of both classes had unlimited access to the assigned materials in every place and at every time, consequently, they could experience a more relaxed and comfortable learning context that could be adopted with their learning style and preferences. The results of the study confirm that these new types of instructional-learning contexts can be integrated into the educational context and teachers can transfer the teaching methods and techniques of conventional classrooms to the new instructional-learning contexts to meet the expectations and needs of today's generation of students or Digital Natives (Barboux, 2006).

The significant positive impacts of flipped and blended teaching strategies are motivated by Schema Theory (Alharabi, 2015; Huang, 2009), and the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996). By sending English newspapers, plentiful examples of the designated English tenses, audio and video tracks in the flipped and blended classes before the class session, and asking the participants to do the activities, some prior knowledge in terms of grammar shaped in the participants' mind. Therefore, during the online classes, the participants' prior knowledge was active and helped them to understand the instructional material better (Khataee & Davoudi, 2018). The results also support the interactionist framework which posits that individuals learn not only through their experience but also by the reciprocal sharing of their actions with others (Boudreaux et al., 2019).

As the results of the control group show, they improved from grammar pre- to post-test, though the differences were not significant. The potential of authentic texts combined with input flood, visual input enhancement, output enhancement, and negotiation. The results of the control group support Tafani (2009) who notes that using newspapers can be a positive challenge for EFL students and encourage them to learn better (Reddy & Nazneen, 2018).

Conclusion

This study intended to explore the effect of blended and flipped teaching strategies on enhancing language learners' grammar through reading authentic materials such as newspapers. The results showed that technology-enhanced learning contexts such as flipped and blended classes played crucial roles in improving students' active engagement in learning grammar. The results of the study justify the claim that different Ed-Tech tools, like those used in flipped and blended classes, can help the language teaching and learning process.

The results of this study can help language teachers to enhance their teaching techniques and meet the new generation of learners' needs in terms of using and benefiting from new technological developments and E-learning contexts. Second language institutions and syllabus designers can design and provide lesson plans by which blended and flipped teaching strategies are part of their instructional syllabus.

The present study investigated EFL students of Payam-e-Noor University only, which may undermine the process of generalizing the findings. Future studies may investigate the effects of flipped, blended, and T-learning classes on learners' learning grammar at different levels of proficiency. It is also desirable to conduct studies to examine the effect of technology-enhanced

learning contexts on the improvement of other language skills and sub-skills such as vocabulary development and pronunciation.

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Appendix B

Three samples of the news articles which were used in this study

Last name..... Student's number.....

Choose the correct answer for the following questions.

1. Ms. Burns, a retired federal worker living in Rockville, Md.,in a home she described as abusive.
 1. grows up
 2. grew up
 3. has grown up
 4. had grown up
2. Three years ago, Janet Burnsherself sliding into depression.
 1. has felt
 2. feels
 3. felt
 4. was feeling
3. Bats for several years, responsible for infecting seven of every 10 people who develop the disease.
 1. have been
 2. had been
 3. were
 4. are
4. The C.D.C. made its announcement to raise awareness that bats rabies.
 1. had carried
 2. carry
 3. carried
 4. have carried
5. Ms. Diamondfrom Oberlin College.
 1. graduated
 2. was graduated
 3. had graduated
 4. has graduated
6. Football players routinelyduring a difficult game.
 1. have not.....died
 2. won'tdie
 3. don'tdie
 4. didn'tdie
7. Tom's mother, the renowned British climber Alison Hargreaves, when he was only 6, also in the mountains.
 1. has died
 2. was dying
 3. died
 4. had died
8. Each year, about 55,000 people an emergency series of rabies shots, because they think they have been exposed.
 1. have received
 2. received
 3. had received
 4. receive

9. The investigation is ongoing and we presumptions about the cause of death.
1. won't make
 2. did not make
 3. hadn't made
 4. hasn't made
10. Americans billions of doses of vaccines for everything from measles to the flu.
1. had received
 2. received
 3. are receiving
 4. have received
11. Vaccines more than 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths among children in a 20-year period.
1. have prevented
 2. had prevented
 3. are preventing
 4. were preventing
12. Before the vaccine, measles more than 3 million Americans and killed more than 400 of them each year.
1. infected
 2. have infected
 3. were infecting
 4. will infect
13. Researchers there is no link between vaccines and autism.
1. have concluded
 2. will conclude
 3. had concluded
 4. are concluding
14. In 1962, he the Vaccination Assistance Act to help ensure all American children were immunized.
1. signed
 2. had signed
 3. will sign
 4. has signed
15. The United States now the worst measles outbreak since the disease was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000.
1. has.....experienced
 2. was.....experienced
 3. had...experienced
 4. is..... experiencing
16. I cannot vote for someone whobe willing to fight for dignity for ALL Americans, no matter their skin color, gender or who they love.”
1. had not
 2. will not
 3. has not
 4. is not
17. The internet space for a bevy of women to get attention for their music.

1. has provided
 2. had provided
 3. was providing
 4. provided
18. A family in Cumming, Ga., about 40 miles from downtown Atlanta, the baby crying around 10 p.m. on June 6 and called the authorities.
1. heard
 2. had heard
 3. was hearing
 4. has heard
19. It typically six to 12 months for an adoption to be finalized.
1. takes
 2. has taken
 3. was taking
 4. is taking
20. Investigators from the sheriff's officestill to determine the identity of the baby and her mother.
1. were.....trying
 2. are.....trying
 3. have.....tried
 4. will.....try

Hannah Diamond, Sam Feldman

Jan. 19, 2019

Hannah Jessie Diamond and Samuel Raphael Feldman are to be married Jan. 20 at the Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan. Jon Hanson, who became a Universal Life minister for the occasion and was a professor of the couple at Harvard Law School, is to officiate.

The couple [met in 2013 at Harvard](#), from which they each received a law degree.

Ms. Diamond, 29, is a public defender at the Legal Aid Society in Brooklyn. She graduated from Oberlin College.

She is the daughter of Shelley J. Sherman of Great Neck, N.Y., and the late David A. Diamond. Until 1990, the bride's mother was a deputy council at the New York State Department of Health's Office of Professional Medical Conduct in Manhattan. She is on the national board of Hadassah, the women's Zionist organization of America, and Young Judaea, a Zionist youth movement with programs for Jewish youth, both in Manhattan. The bride's father was a law professor at Hofstra in Hempstead, N.Y., where he taught civil procedure, education law, trial advocacy and family law.

Mr. Feldman, 31, is a public defender at Appellate Advocates, a nonprofit organization in Manhattan that has contracts with the city to defend cases involving low-income clients in Staten Island, Brooklyn and Queens. He graduated from the University of Chicago.

He is the son of Natalie Wexler and James A. Feldman of Washington. His mother is the author of "The Knowledge Gap: The Hidden Cause of America's Broken Education System — and How to Fix It" (Avery, 2019) and an author of "The Writing Revolution: Advancing Thinking Through Writing in All Subjects and Grades" (Jossey-Bass, 2017). She is a senior contributor, focusing on education, at Forbes.com. She is the chairwoman of the board of the Writing Revolution, a nonprofit group in Manhattan that promotes and provides training in a method of writing instruction. His father is a litigator in private practice, who has argued 51 cases before the United States Supreme Court. From 1989 to 2006, he was an assistant to the solicitor general at the Department of Justice in Washington. He is on the boards of the [Forward](#), a nonprofit publication in Manhattan focusing on news and topics of interest to the American Jewish community; and the Washington National Opera.

Are Mountain Climbers Selfish?

The recent deaths of three alpinists once again raises questions about this dangerous pursuit.

By Francis Sanzaro

Mr. Sanzaro is the editor of Rock and Ice and Ascent magazines.

April 27, 2019



CARBONDALE, Colo. — When someone dies, the mourning process is typically straightforward. But when young climbers die in the mountains doing something extremely risky, mourning is surprisingly controversial.

This month, Jess Roskelley, Hansjörg Auer and David Lama [died in an avalanche](#) while alpine climbing on the east face of the 10,810-foot Howse Peak, north of Banff, in Alberta, Canada. They were, respectively, 36, 35 and 28. In the aftermath, our community of climbers has once again laid down on the couch and resumed our conversation about mountaineering's biggest complex: death and tragedy.

All three were at the top of their game. To climbers, the news of their deaths was the equivalent of waking up and learning that Tom Brady, Le'Veon Bell and Antonio Brown had been killed on the gridiron. The difference is that football players don't routinely die during a difficult game. The same can't be said of alpinists. The graveyard in mountaineering's most fabled playground, Chamonix, France, is filled with young men who died climbing in the massif of Mont Blanc. For many of us, our eyes were still glassy from February, when [Daniele Nardi and Tom Ballard](#) disappeared on Nanga Parbat, a 26,660-foot peak in the western Himalayas. Tom's mother, the renowned British climber Alison Hargreaves, [had died](#) when he was only 6, also in the mountains, in a storm after summiting K2, the world's second-highest mountain, without supplemental oxygen. At the time, in 1995, she was accused of being a reckless mother. How dare she leave her young son and daughter at home and attempt one of the world's most dangerous mountains? As always, the truth is complicated.

Dierdre Wolownick, whose son Alex Honnold recently starred in "[Free Solo](#)," the documentary about [his ropeless ascent](#) of Yosemite's 3,000-foot El Capitan, said she balked at the idea of telling Alex to stop free soloing. She cited her unwillingness to take something away from her son that gives him so much joy. Most mothers surely thought she was crazy, but I thought her love was brave.

A common refrain, inside and outside the climbing community, is that the higher the risk, the higher the reward. In terms of an ego boost, this might be accurate, but the formula is trite and elitist, and it obscures the true motivations for doing dangerous climbs.

I can tell you that standing on a dime-size foothold with no rope, with your fingertips on a sloping edge, in a remote part of the mountains where one mistake means instant death, in no way translates to a heightened experience. I've been there. You're proud and exhilarated you lived through it and kept it together when most people on the planet couldn't. It can change you permanently, not always for the better. But I've had more profound mystical experiences at the park watching my kids play.

If you need to go to the ends of the earth and the edge of your mortality to find some mystical *je ne sais quoi*, then you need to rethink your strategy. I climb because I love it. So did David, Jess and Hansjörg.

Nearly all mountaineers will say they "are aware" of the risks. They're not lying. They have a lot of friends who have died, most likely dozens. But risk is a strange thing. In the mountains, you talk about death a lot: A feature can be called a "death block," a section a "death pitch," or a camp a "death bivouac." Often, you ponder what could happen if you kept going up in a storm, but never about yourself dying. Dying happens to someone else, until it doesn't. This doesn't make climbers ignorant, just human. Plus, too much obsession on death takes away your positivity and focus, the most valuable assets in climbing, but those, too, can obscure risk.

By the Numbers: Vaccines Are Safe

Americans have received billions of doses of vaccines for everything from measles to the flu. In 30 years, very few injury claims have been filed with the federal government.



Credit...Kent Sievers/Omaha World-Herald, via Associated Press

By Pam Belluck and Reed Abelson

- June 18, 2019
- Vaccines have saved hundreds of thousands of American lives in recent years. According to estimates by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaccines have [prevented more than 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths among children](#) in a 20-year period.
- Measles is a good example. Before the vaccine, measles infected [more than 3 million Americans and killed more than 400 of them each year](#). [One in four people who get measles are likely to be hospitalized and one or two in 1,000 are likely to die](#), the C.D.C. reports.
- In comparison, over roughly the last dozen years, the [National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program](#), established to compensate people who were injured by vaccines, has received about two claims for every million immunizations containing the measles vaccine (including MMR and MMR-Varicella). About half of those claims have been dismissed because the injury program found the evidence showed the vaccine was not responsible for the injury.
- Billions of doses of vaccines have been given to Americans in the 30 years of the injury program's existence. During that time, [about 21,000 people filed claims](#). Of 18,000 claims that have been evaluated so far, roughly two-thirds have been dismissed because the program determined that the evidence showed vaccines were not at fault.
- About 6,600 claims have been compensated. Most of those — about 70 percent — were settlements in cases where the program did not find sufficient evidence that vaccines caused any injury. Program officials say they usually compensate people if their medical condition and timing of symptoms match descriptions on [an official list](#), even if there isn't enough evidence that the vaccine was responsible.
- Many claims in recent years concern the flu vaccine, which health officials now recommend annually for adults and children — and which accounts for almost half of all the vaccine doses distributed these days. Over roughly the last dozen years (from 2006 through 2017, the period for which the injury compensation program has dosage data), more than 1.5 billion doses of flu vaccine were given out. During that time, fewer than 3,500 injury claims were filed — roughly two claims for every million doses. Many of those claims do not relate to the vaccine itself, but to shoulder injuries, usually in adults, that occurred because a health provider injected a vaccine in the wrong spot on the shoulder. Public health officials say they are increasing training for health providers to help them avoid that type of mistake.