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## The Impact of Flipped Model Instruction on Writing

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### ABSTRACT

According to the literature, flipped instruction model is a new pedagogical approach which has been recently taken into consideration in the field of language learning and teaching. In this method “flipped classroom” is combined with technology and it is described as an instructional model that implicitly provides lectures outside of class for learners and creates a student-oriented as well as in-class active learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2013). This experimental study, using a pre-test posttest design, was aimed at investigating the impact of flipped model on writing skill. The participants were 39 candidates, who were assigned to two groups: the flipped classroom (FC) and the traditional classroom (TC). Each group received 3 sessions of treatment. First, whether there was any significant difference between the FC and TC in the overall quality of the IELTS task 2 essays was examined. The FC group significantly outperformed the TC one. Then, the difference between the communicative patterns was investigated. The FC group indicated higher classroom interaction than the TC one. Next, the participants` view towards experiencing FCI was examined. The results found that, the majority of candidates both in FC group and the TC group echoed positively. The results found in FC group, could be attributed not only to the flipped instruction but also the process of actively engaging the learners in their learning in addition to incorporating different techniques, such as the uploaded videos on virtual channels, collaborative writing, as well as in-class teacher-learner interactions.

**Keywords:** *Flipped Classroom, Student-Oriented Class, Active Learning, Pedagogical Approach, Iran*

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### 1. Introduction

Writing skill is a complex process because it requires the skillful coordination of both cognitive and linguistic processes and resources (Hayes & Kellogg, 1996). Besides, the challenges that second language and foreign language learner's face in learning a language are numerous when the medium of instruction is not their first language in particular. Among language skills, writing, in particular, represents a major concern for many EFL learners who are expected to complete reports and longer research essays as part of their academic career. Language learners are usually apprehensive of writing because focusing on higher level skills of planning and organizing (i.e. generating and organizing ideas) as well as lower level skills of spelling, punctuation and word choice which could be a daunting task (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Although the majority of

English language learners reach the so-called advanced levels, they usually have difficulties with appropriate and authentic skills of writing. The problems are mainly related to collocation, inappropriate vocabulary usage, grammar, coherence, cohesive devices, etc. Therefore, the probability of getting high score on a standardized test such as IELTS seems to be very demanding and taxing for them. As a result, teaching second language (henceforth, L2) writing skill is not only very important but also challenging for L2 writing instructors (Farah, 2014). Considering the mentioned issues, the current study attempted to seek an effective technique for L2 writing instruction noticed the ‘flipped learning approach’ and decided to investigate its effectiveness on writing skill.

Based on the literature, to resolve the students’ writing problems posed by their



different needs as the result of their different learning styles, flipped classrooms could be implemented to facilitate students with different phases of learning and to encourage more student engagement. Flipped classroom instruction is described as an instructional model that provides lectures outside of class for learners and creates a student-oriented as well as in-class active learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2013). In its simplest term, what used to be classwork (the lecture) is done at home via teacher-created videos and what used to be homework (assigned problems) is done in class.

It is stated that the flipped classroom “serves the principles of personalized-differentiated learning, student-centered instruction, and constructivism.” (Basal, 2015, p. 29). It is personalized due to the fact that every individual student views/reviews material and learns at their own pace and according to their own needs (Basal, 2015; Egbert, Herman, & Lee, 2015; Muldrow, 2013). It is student-centered because the students are highly active and mainly engaged in class activities (Baepler, Walker, Driessen, 2014; Basal, 2015; Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Davies, Dean, Ball, 2013; O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015), whereas the teacher’s role changes to a guide, facilitator and organizer (Basal, 2015; Bishop & Verleger, 2013). The students take responsibility for their own learning (Basal, 2015). Teachers can structure class time to optimize their attention to each individual student (Ekmekci, 2017; Muldrow, 2013) and carefully notice the students’ learning and understanding of information (Johnson & Renner, 2012; Roehl, Reddy, & Shannon, 2013). Additionally, the class time can incorporate a variety of activities, group work, and interactive discussion (Basal, 2015; Danker, 2015; Egbert et al., 2015; Muldrow, 2013) that may not usually fit into the class activities in traditional classrooms due to time constraints of the curriculum (Egbert et al., 2015; Muldrow, 2013). In light of all the mentioned issues, in a flipped classroom, the students’ different needs and learning styles can be addressed (Afrilyasanti, Cahyono, & Astuti, 2016).

## 2. Theoretical Background

The students are highly active and engaged in class activities, so the principles supporting the flipped instruction approach are rooted in theoretical understandings of active learning (Bonnell & Eison, 1991; Meyers & Jones, 1993). Besides, with regard to approaches in language teaching, the

flipped instruction follows the learning theories of Communicative Language Teaching (Ahmed, 2016), which is also corroborated by interactional theory and socio-cultural learning theory (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In flipped classrooms, the learners cooperate and collaborate as well as interact with the teacher in order to achieve understanding of the lesson, which is consistent with the interactional theory.

Flipped classroom is also supported by Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory or social constructivism because, based on Richards and Rodgers’ (2014) description of this theory, through flipped instruction, learning takes place through scaffolding, the process of interaction between the people in the classroom, as they do the activities. Learning takes place in a context in which there is interaction among people (students and teachers), instruments (videos, books, etc.) and organized activities.

Moreover, the instructional videos are used in flipped classrooms, which is in fact, an example of Computer or Technology Assisted Language Learning (CALL/TALL), to which the Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory can be applied (Warschauer, 2005) due to the fact that based on Vygotsky (1981, as cited in Warschauer, 2005), via mediation or the incorporation of tools or mediational means, the entire flow and structure of mental functions will alter; computer can be an example of those mediational means (Warschauer, 2005). Additionally, the interactive learning environment in the L2 learning, corroborates the social learning aspect of the Vygotskyian’s theory (Warschauer, Turbee, & Roberts, 1996).

In light of the above-mentioned points, the researchers of the current study decided to examine the impact of this moderately new instruction model of teaching on writing skill whose details are going to be explained in the procedure Section; consequently, this study has addressed the following question:

Does FCI maximize the interaction in the classroom? If so, does the difference between groups affects writing performance? The study also examined the learners’ perception towards FCI as another research question to the current study.

## 3. Review of Literature

Studies on the effect of flipped classrooms are scarce (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2014), especially in the field of foreign language education. In this line, Enfield (2013) further indicates that

most published studies are anecdotal reports. Literature reviews have yielded a limited number of studies, most of which involved pretest posttest quasi-experimental designs in the area of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematic (Davies et al., 2013; Day & Foley, 2006; Mason, Shuman, & Cook, 2013) education and fewer studies have been conducted in the area of teaching EFL and writing in particular.

The following are some of the previous studies relevant to the present one.

Farah (2014) compared the effect of flipped instructional method and traditional one on the writing performance of twelfth grade Emirati female students in a technical high school by a fifteen-week teaching program. She found that the experimental group that experienced flipped instruction significantly outperformed the control group that received traditional instruction.

Leis, Tohei, and Cooke (2015) compared a traditional English composition course with the other using the flipped method with 22 Japanese university students. The results showed that those studying under the flipped method produced a significantly higher number of words in essays. In addition, the participants who received the flipped method resulted in significantly greater improvements in their writing proficiency.

Likewise, Hung (2015) investigated the impacts of flipping the classroom on English language learners' academic performance, participation levels, and learning attitudes. Developing three different formats for flipped teaching, the researcher found that the structured and semi-structured flipped lessons enable learners to get better outcomes, to develop better attitudes, and to devote more effort to the learning process.

Furthermore, Sung (2015) flipped an English content-based class comprised of twelve university students enrolled in an elective course. Prior to each class, the learners previewed lesson materials such as readings and videos and engaged in diverse online activities on a Learning Management System (LMS) platform. Then, they performed collaborative class activities such as sharing their thoughts on paper, discussing questions concerning weekly online readings, and completing the final project of designing an evaluation plan. The results of the analysis of both informal and formal course evaluations and student work demonstrated that they were positive with FCI despite early integration difficulties. The results also indicated that FCI is a good

alternative for modification, at least in current English language teaching.

Afrilyasanti et al., (2016) explored the effect of using flipped classroom model on the writing ability of 62 EFL students at an Indonesian secondary school level across their individual differences in learning. The learning group proved to be significantly better than the control group.

Ahmed (2016) investigated the effect of a flipping classroom on writing skill in the EFL context of Saudi Arabia with 60 female university students (30 in flipped classroom and 30 in the control group). The flipped learning group was significantly better than the control group. Additionally, the participants who experienced flipped learning have positive attitudes towards it.

Another study conducted by Nouri (2016) investigated the Swedish learners' attitude towards flipped learning in research methods by administrating the questionnaire. The outcomes showed that a great number of the participants expressed a positive attitude towards flipped classroom due to increased motivation, engagement, increased and more effective learning.

Ekmekci (2017) compared flipped and traditional face-to-face lecture-based writing classes on the basis of writing performances with 23 Turkish English Language Teaching (ELT) students in the experimental group and 20 ELT preparatory class students in the control group for fifteen weeks. The flipped classroom significantly outperformed the traditional one after the treatment process. Besides, the majority of the students in the flipped instruction group held positive attitudes towards the received instruction.

FCI has been explored in various fields of education from different points of views, including the attitudes of instructors and learners, implementation, advantages, and disadvantages. Several researchers have claimed that FCI is a beneficial method of instruction (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Strayer, 2012; Mireille, 2014). Nevertheless, some researchers have viewed FCI as similar to traditional instruction in terms of learners' achievement and performance (Ford, Burns, Mitch, & Gomez, 2012; Zownorega, 2013). Technology has played a great role in developing education, but it has not been practically utilized in the 21st century by Iranian educators for the purpose of creating a better learning environment among Iraqi EFL learners. This study attempts to illustrate the impact of a new approach on Iranian EFL learners' writing outcomes. It also serves as an infrastructure



for developing an educational system that shifts the influence of learning among Iranian EFL learners.

#### **4. Methodology**

##### **4.1 Participants and Groupings**

The participants of this study consisted of 39 advanced learners in an English language institute attending the 2018 fall semester. They were selected based on convenient sampling method due to administrative limitations the researcher faced in terms of seeking the institutes' managers' agreement on accessing advanced learners in a given institute. The learners were in two intact classes, one of which was randomly assigned as the control group consisted of 19 learners, and the other class was assigned as the experimental group which included 20 individuals. The candidates in the control group received conventional instruction in class while the experimental group was exposed to flipped instruction. It is worth mentioning that the classes were co-ed and the learners ages ranged from 20 to 31. In addition, they were either Bachelor or Master degree holders spoke Persian.

##### **4.2 Design**

With regard to the research questions of the study, a mixed method research was chosen since quantitative or qualitative alone was not sufficient to answer research questions (Creswell & Clark, 2011). As the present study was intended to compare the writing performance between the experimental group and the control group, a quasi-experimental design was adopted. In addition, considering the fact that the interaction occurred in the class was the focus of the study, a qualitative approach to the study had to be adopted. Accordingly, a mixed method was used as the design of the study to address both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study.

##### **4.3 Instrumentation**

The researcher study made use of three different instruments in this study: (1) quick placement test (QPT), (2) writing test and (3) classroom observation.

###### **4.3.1 Quick placement test**

This test which was administered to determine homogeneity of the learners had 60 multiple choice items in three sections including vocabulary, grammar, and reading passages. Learners had 60 minutes to take the test under serious testing condition. This test was scored from 60 and the test takers who score above 47 were considered to be advanced learners according to the test manual. The validity of the test was

approved through expert judgment. That is two of the refereed L2 teachers opined over the tests administered. Besides, to calculate the reliability of the test Cronbach alpha was estimated which was found to be .79.

###### **4.3.2 Classroom observations**

In order to compare the number of differences in classroom interactions between the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG), six sessions (three for the control group and three for the experimental group) were recorded for the observation. Thus, this phase was used to further check the communication patterns occurred among the interlocutors to deeply investigate and analyze the observation process. The recorded videos were replayed by the instructor/researcher after the course final grades are submitted. The verbal flow technique (Acheson & Gall, 1997) was employed for the present study to transcribe and further analyze the interaction occurred in the class. Using this scheme, the researcher could find out: (a) the frequency of the questions that the instructor asks the whole class, (b) the frequency of the questions the instructor asks the individuals, (c) the frequency of students' responses to these questions, (d) the frequency of the output with errors, and (e) the frequency of student-student interactions.

###### **4.3.3 Writing tests**

The writing course in this study was a performance-based course which aimed at developing coherency and accuracy of the participants in writing skill comprehensively. In order to measure the outcomes of the writings, a pre-test, and a posttest were administered at the beginning and the end of the course for both groups, respectively. The test required the candidates to write an essay with at least 250 words in 40 minutes time. Considering the time interval between the two administrations, and considering the fact the participants did not know that the test was going to be repeated after the course, it can be argued that the test familiarity could not have affected the results on the posttest (see appendix A). In addition, it is worth mentioning that the test was rated with reference to the IELTS public scoring rubric. Two experienced raters were asked to score the test papers and the inter-rater reliability was calculated. The results are shown and discussed in chapter four. In order to ensure the inter-rate reliability of the scores, Pearson correlation test was run and the observed index was found to be .83.

###### **4.3.4 Interview**

The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview after the course. It began with a number of questions and then further questions were asked, if needed, to clarify the respondent's comments or push them to elaborate more on the issue they raise. The interview with the experimental group's participants began by asking about their general attitude toward the use of FCI which they underwent. Then, the researcher asked about the pros and cons of the instruction mode they experienced. The prompts are presented in Appendix B.

#### 4.4 Material

##### 4.4.1 The flipped instruction virtual channel

The lecture videos from well-known IELTS tutors as well as other related files were uploaded on the created virtual channel (IELTS House); thus, separate videos for each grammar topic as well as writing skill were uploaded. The videos in the present study were mainly from different qualified and certified lecturers. Therefore, the learners in the experimental group were instructed to watch the lecture videos as well as other materials that were uploaded on the created virtual channel on Telegram prior to coming to the class. In this way learners simply chose to watch the lecture videos outside the classroom in their convenient time and condition. Since the purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of the flipped classroom model, part of which involved viewing of the lecture videos outside of class time, providing the studying materials outside the class was crucial.

##### 4.4.2 The textbook

Collins book for IELTS writing (William, 2011) is divided into 12 units. Each unit focuses on a topic that the candidates are likely to meet in the IELTS exam. This helps the candidates to build up a bank of vocabulary and ideas related to a variety of the topics. Unit 1-11 covers the key stages of the writing process: everything from analyzing the task to proof-reading a completed response. Every exercise is relevant to the test. The candidates work towards unit 12, which provides a final practice IELTS writing test. Additionally, the book provides examination strategies telling the candidates what to expect and how best to succeed in the test. Each of the first 11 units is divided into 3 parts. Part 1 introduces vocabulary related to the topic as well as a selection of the most common academic words and expression needed for the writing functions covered in the unit. Part 2 provides step-by-step exercises and guidance on the key stages of the writing

process. Part 3 provides exam practice question for the writing task 2 in a format that allows the actual exam. In the traditional scheduling, each unit is covered in a 3-day cycle. The first day is spent on mastering the newly introduced grammar structures as well as vocabulary with the class lecture and interactive exercises. The next day focuses on improving writing skills. The lesson quiz is administered on the third day.

#### 4.5 Data Collection Procedure

Both groups used a course book called writing for IELTS (William, 2011). The conventional instruction model was utilized for the control group and flipped instruction was implemented for the experimental group. According to Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2014), in order to make the flipped classroom more efficient, the learners were informed of its purpose and process thoroughly. Therefore, the learners in the experimental group received an orientation session, which explained the purpose of the flipped instruction. They were trained on the effective use of lecture videos as well as other provided material on the virtual channel. The learners were also instructed to watch the lecture videos as well as other materials on the provided channel. They were also required to take notes before coming to the class. The videos were always accessible on the virtual channel, so learners could play and replay the videos as well as other uploaded materials by their computers, tablets, and smart phones at any time of the day, before and after the class. Following the orientation, a flipped classroom model was begun in the experimental. The control group continued receiving the conventional instructional approach.

#### 4.6 Procedure in the Traditional Classroom

The control group spent the first 10 minutes taking a daily quiz and reviewing grammar topics from the prior lesson, followed by a teacher-centered grammar lecture for 20 minutes.

#### 4.7 Procedure in the Flipped Classroom

On the other hand, in the flipped classroom approach, learners were required to watch the lecture videos and take notes before coming to the class. Out of the 90-minute class period, the first 8 to 10 minutes were spent on a daily quiz and a question and answer session to check for grammar understanding. In the flipped classroom, since there was no scheduled grammar lecture, the class was able to spend more time on oral interaction activities than the



traditional instruction group to talk more about writing and their problems.

**5. Analysis and Results**

**5.1 Results Related to Research Question One**

The first research Question was as follows: What are the differences in learners’ writing performance between a flipped classroom model (experimental) and the ongoing instructional approach (control)?

In order to investigate how the implementation of the FCI influenced the achievement of EFL learners, the following analysis was done.

To answer this research question, the scores obtained from the test administration before and after the intervention were considered. In order to test the hypothesis for the first research question the researcher compared the pretest and posttest scores of the FCI group and the control group. Moreover, the pretest and posttest scores obtained from each group were compared. The results are shown in the following tables.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics for IELTS pretest scores*

	Group	N	Std.		Std. Error Mean
			Mean	Deviation	
IELTS Pretest	Experimental	19	3.8947	.20943	.04805
	Control	20	3.8000	.37697	.08429

The mean score for the FCI group was 3.89 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.20. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 3.80 and the standard deviation was 0.37. The results show that the control group's mean score is slightly lower than that of the FCI group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group is a little more heterogeneous than the FCI group.

*Table 2: Descriptive statistics for IELTS posttest scores*

	Group	N	Std.		Std. Error Mean
			Mean	Deviation	
IELTS Posttest	Experimental	19	4.2632	.53667	.12312
	Control	20	4.0250	.63815	.14269

The mean score for the FCI group was 4.26 on a nine-point scale and the standard deviation was 0.53. Moreover, the mean score of the control group on the same test was 4.02 and the standard deviation was 0.37. The results show that the control

group's mean score is lower than that of the FCI group and the standard deviation statistic shows that the control group is more heterogeneous than the FCI group.

In order to further analyze the results inferentially, the normality of the distribution had to be tested.

*Table 3: Normality test for pretest scores*

Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk			
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.	
IELTS Pretest	Experimental	.482	19	.000	.507	19	.000
	Control	.452	20	.000	.569	20	.000
IELTS Posttest	Experimental	.372	19	.000	.740	19	.000
	Control	.266	20	.001	.862	20	.009

To test the normality of the IELTS academic scores for the experimental and control groups, for both sets of scores the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality was conducted. As Table 3 suggests, the null hypothesis, which assumes the homogeneity of variance and normal distribution of the sample, could be rejected for the FCI group’s pretest scores ( $Z_{K-S} = .48$ ,  $p$ -value=.00), and posttest scores ( $Z_{K-S} = .37$ ,  $p$ -value=.00). Moreover, the null hypothesis for the normality of the scores can be rejected for the control group pretest ( $Z_{K-S} = .45$ ,  $p$ -value=.00) and posttest scores ( $Z_{K-S} = .26$ ,  $p$ -value=.00). Therefore, a non-parametric test had to be used to test the hypotheses.

In order to compare the results of IELTS pretest scores of the experimental and the control groups, a Mann-Whitney test was conducted.

*Table 4: Mann-Whitney test for comparing pretest scores of the experimental and control groups*

	IELTS Pretest
Mann-Whitney U	176.500
Wilcoxon W	386.500
Z	-.516
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.606
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.708 <sup>a</sup>

It can be inferred from Table 4.4 that the difference between the IELTS pretest mean scores ( $U = 176.00$ ,  $p = .60$ ) was not statistically significant since the obtained  $p$  value is more than 0.05. Therefore, the difference seen in Table 4.1 is negligible. In other words, there was no statistically significant difference between the performance of the experimental group and that of the control group on the pre-test.

Table 4 illustrates the results of Mann-Whitney test to compare the posttest scores of the experimental and control groups. This procedure was taken to test the second null hypothesis of the study – there is no statistically significant difference between the performance of the FCI approach group and the conventional approach group on the language proficiency test.

Table 5: Mann-Whitney test for comparing posttest scores of the experimental and control groups

	IELTS Posttest
Mann-Whitney U	154.000
Wilcoxon W	364.000
Z	-1.113
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.266
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.322 <sup>a</sup>

It can be understood from Table 5 that the difference between the IELTS posttest mean scores (U= 154.00, p= .26) was not statistically significant since the obtained p value was less than 0.05. Therefore, the difference seen in Table 2 is negligible. In other words, it can be concluded that the second null hypothesis of the study which holds that “there is no statistically significant difference between the performance of the FCI approach group and the conventional approach group on the language proficiency test” was rejected regarding the fact that the FCI approach did not lead to a statistically significant difference on the IELTS posttest for the experimental group as compared with the performance of the control group who were treated with the conventional approach.

However, further analysis showed that this approach was similar to the conventional approach in improving the learner's general language ability suggesting that both approaches had positive effects on learners’ language improvement as compared with their performance on the pretest. In order to trace any possible change in the experimental and control groups, Wilcoxon test was run. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Progress in IELTS scores in the experimental and control groups

	IELTS Pretest for Experimental Group	IELTS Pretest for Control Group	IELTS Posttest for Experimental Group	IELTS Posttest for Control Group
Z	-2.640 <sup>a</sup>	-2.121 <sup>a</sup>		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.034		

Table 6 shows that the FCI groups' scores improved significantly (Z= 2.60, p= .00) and the control group's scores (Z= 2.12, p= .03) on the posttest and the IELTS posttest scores were significantly higher than the pretest for both groups. In other words, it can be claimed that both interventions, FCI and conventional ones, were similarly effective in improving the IELTS scores of the learners in this study. As a result, the first hypothesis holding that “the employment of FCI Approach in EFL classes will not be effective in terms of improving intermediate EFL learners’ achievements was accepted. However, the difference between the performance of the experimental group and that of the control group on the posttest was not statistically significant.

### 5.2 Results Related to Research Question Two

The second research question of the study was: Does FCI maximize the interaction of the learners in the classroom?

To answer this research question the classes held for both groups during the course were recorded and observed. For the purposes of this study, the utterances that were produced by either the instructor or the students were divided into two types. An utterance that was completed and fit in one of the types was deemed an oral production and recorded as an output. Figure 1 presents the output count for both the instructor and the students.

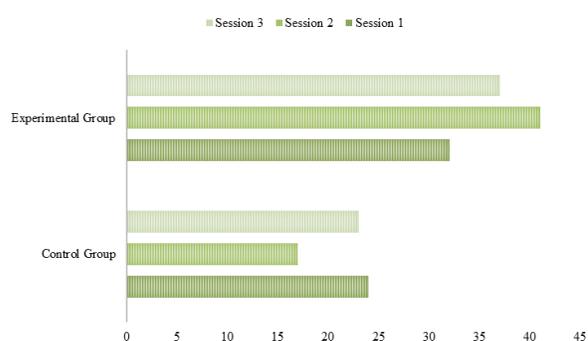


Figure 1: Comparisons of the frequency of oral output (teacher to student – whole class)

The data in Figure 1 shows that the number of teacher-students whole-class questions was higher in the FCI group than that of the control group in all three observed sessions for each. Session 2 was the most noticeable, with FCI group's 41 times versus control group's 17 times. These numbers suggest that the students in the FCI group received more oral input, or opportunities to hear the target language.

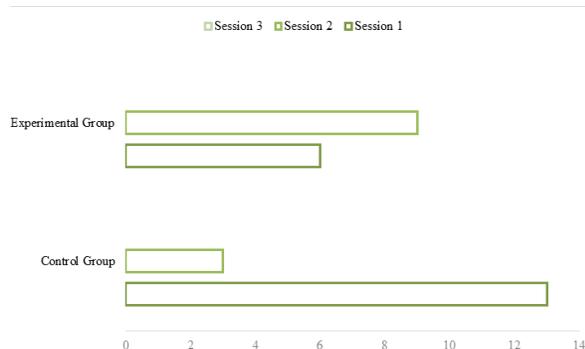


Figure 2: Comparisons of the frequency of oral output (teacher to student – individual)

In Session 3, according to Figure 2, the instructor did not ask any questions from individual students in either class. When comparing the number of teacher-learner questions in Session 1 and Session 2, the control group had a higher occurrence than the experimental group, 13 times versus 6 times in Session 1, while the experimental group had a higher occurrence than the control group in Session 2, that is, 9 times versus 3 times. This may be due to the fact that the instructor observed that the students in the control group were less attentive than the students in the FCI group, which resulted in the instructor addressing students individually to elicit participation and to confirm students' understanding.

The comparison of the frequency of oral output in the classroom between the FCI group and the control group revealed that the FCI had higher frequency of output opportunity than the control group overall. That is, the answer to the research question is positive.

### 5.3 Results Related to Research Question Three

The third research question of the study was: What are the students' perceptions of their learning experience with a flipped classroom approach versus a traditional approach?

The third research question of the study asked about the students' attitudes about FCI and their motivation to further use this. To answer the third research question an interview was conducted and 13 learners from the experimental group volunteered to take part in this study. The questions of the semi-structured interview conducted are mentioned one by one in this section and the interpretation of the results are presented accordingly.

1- Have you ever used FCI before this course?

Considering the answers of the interviewees to this question it can be concluded that the method as presented in this study was new to the learners since none

of the learners had used this technique for the writing instruction. However, one of the interviewees, Sanaz, said that she had already used a similar technique to improve her English and getting prepared for the exams while she was preparing for the national university entrance exam. The fact that none of the learners used this method for the writing courses shows that the group was intact as for the use of FCI.

2- Do you think this method could help you improve your writing? How?

Among the 13 learners who attended the interview session, 11 learners agreed with the idea that it was a useful technique while the other two believed that they could have obtained a similar result if there had not been any FCI in the course. In fact, one of the learners, Gelareh, said that the traditional technique of "writing the drafts and giving them to the teacher for scoring and revision is much faster, handier and more comfortable than this method". The same view was echoed in what the other interviewee mentioned about this technique. They believed that referring to mobile phone instead of the books and note books to review the points and instruction highlights may be destructive to their understanding new points about writing techniques for IELTS. Moreover, this technique was time-consuming. Moreover, they believed that going online here and there would be annoying for them and is not practical especially in case they are not using 3G or 4G data on their smartphones.

Among the 11 learners who supported the idea of using FCI, two learners did not have any concrete example or reason to mention for their motivation to use this technique. However, the other ones welcomed the idea by mentioning that it would greatly help them remember the points better and grasp the key techniques of improving their writing better. Moreover, some of them believed that it would help them remember the ideas for a longer period of time. In addition, two of the learners mentioned that it is the most efficient way for reviewing their lessons so that they would not need referring to the book.

3- Do you think you have a better picture of the IELTS writing exam in comparison to the time you were following your teachers' preferences and strategies only?

Five of the learners were not sure about the answer. In fact, four learners were disagreeing with the idea. However, the other nine learners agreed with the idea and

had a positive attitude toward the technique they were using. In the same line, Sima stated that "I feel, in comparison to my friends, I have a better mastery of the techniques and performance. For example, I can easily remember the points that I had already faced in the beginning of the course, especially while editing."

4- Do you think this method of learning and teaching writing is enjoyable and attractive to you? Why?

Nine out of the thirteen learners attending the interview found the mobile assisted instruction attractive and enjoyable. Seven of the learners emphasized the collaborative nature of the tasks in an online group and commented that doing the activities in groups helped them to better understand the context of the exam as well as the relation between the ideas. Moreover, since the technique was new to them, doing it in groups helped them have a stress-free experience of learning. Laleh stated that:

"This technique is good especially when you cannot attend the class. I was absent for two sessions and I could easily ask my friends to tell me what was going in the class. They could clearly explain the points as well as the context to me. If the class was like a usual one, I had to just copy the handwritten notes of my friends and they would tell me they did not remember what he instructor talked about."

5- Do you find the length of lecture videos long enough?

As to the length of lecture videos and other materials uploaded on the virtual channel, the majority of the participants found the duration of the videos appropriate. Amid the participants one echoed that it is too little and he is not able to get and comprehend the grammatical topics only by a 5-minute video. A needs more explanations.

6- Would you continue using this technique in future?

The interesting point was that four of the learners welcomed the idea and said that they would continue using it in courses even other than English. Laleh said that "This is a good way to share and practice the lessons and also know what the related contexts are, especially when the teacher is present to correct us."

However, other six learners found the method to be effective for language learning, but they were not sure about using it in the future. They were not sure if they can establish such an online group without the teachers' help. However, they admitted the effectiveness of the method.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study prove that flipped writing class improves learners' writing performance more than the traditional lecture-based writing instruction, so employing flipped learning in writing classes can be considered as an effective way of instruction for improving writing skills of EFL students. The findings corroborate the previous relevant studies considering the effect of flipped writing classrooms on the EFL learners' writing proficiency (Afrilyasanti, Cahyono, & Astuti, 2016; Ahmed, 2016; Ekmekci, 2017; Farah, 2014; Leis, Tohei, & Cooke, 2015). The results can be attributed to the following points:

The findings could be interpreted as the benefits of incorporating different techniques in teaching, which is in fact a form of blended learning and a set of class tasks that are differentiated depending on students' personal and various abilities (Ahmed, 2016). The findings also supports the belief that flipped classroom maximizes the interactional time in the classroom if the learners' differences, such as their different needs and learning styles, are satisfied by the utilized educational technique in the classroom, such as the video screencasting in the present study, beneficial effects will be produced (Afrilyasanti, Cahyono, & Astuti, 2016; Cohen, 2012; Dörnyei, 2005; Mayer & Moreno, 2003).

As the concluding remarks, two points need to be mentioned: The present study was an action research-based quasi-experimental mixed methods inquiry described by Creswell (2005, 2008), McMillan (2006), and Stringer (2007) on an IELTS writing course. Several limitations must be considered.

First, learning a foreign language involves complex variables such as attitude and motivation (Dörnyei, 2003), many of which could not be controlled within the scope of this study. Second, convenient sampling employed in this study prevented the generalization of the results. However, the principal purpose of this study was not to generalize from the results since this study was grounded in action research which is practical in nature seeking to improve one's own classroom instruction (Creswell, 2005).

Rather, this study may provide a reference for those who are interested in implementing the flipped classroom approach in their own foreign language classroom. In addition, the small sample size in this study is not generally ideal "in order



to obtain statistical significance” (Calfee & Sperling, 2010, p. 61). Indeed, the quantitative analysis of this study did not generate any statistical significance as a result of the small sample sizes.

Third, while flipped classrooms are gaining momentum in the field of education, the majority of research is concentrated in STEM subjects. This study focused on the effect of the flipped classroom approach, specifically on writing performance; it did not include other language skills. Fourth, the participants were IELTS preparation course candidates in which most of them were at the novice or beginning level of writing; thus, the outcomes might not apply to students at the higher levels.

In summary, it may be difficult to draw generalizations from this study to other foreign language and other academic subject classrooms; however, the present study can potentially contribute to filling in the literature gap in the study of a flipped classroom approach in foreign language teaching and learning

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#### [Appendix A: Writing Test Topics](#)

Test task:

Some people think it is okay for adults to play computer games. Others think that only children should play computer games. Which opinion do you agree with and why?

Include specific details and examples to support your choice.

#### [Appendix B: Interview questions](#)

1. Have you ever used FCI before this course?
2. Do you think this method could help you improve your writing? How?
3. Do you think you have a better picture of the IELTS writing exam in comparison to the time you were following your teachers' preferences and strategies only?
4. Do you think this method of learning and teaching writing is enjoyable and attractive to you? Why?
5. Would you continue using this technique in future?