Impacts of Flipped Classroom Instruction on Micro/Macro Writing Subskills in Iranian EFL Context

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Abstract

As a model for a new pedagogical approach, Flipped Instruction has been recently exploited as a worldwide modern technique where the actual classroom activities following assignments in conventional classroom are reversed in a logical sequence which often seems to integrate or supplement with instructional materials in video or PowerPoint forms. The current research strives to illuminate the effect of flipped classroom (FC) instruction on the achievements in macro/micro EFL writing subskills of Iranian upper intermediate students. For the purpose of this experiment, 78 male and female upper intermediate EFL learners aged 25-38 were selected from three language schools in Ahvaz based on their scores on the Quick Oxford Placement Test, and then equally divided into control and experimental groups. An IELTS argumentative essay was used as the main tool of the study which was considered both as a pretest and a posttest. Used as a pretest, the IETLS argumentative essay was meant to support the fact that both groups were of similar status with regard to the writing proficiency. Besides, the posttest was used to assess any distinguishing features between the two groups due to the treatment. The control group experienced the conventional classroom instruction whilst the experimental group received FC instruction. To address the research questions, a descriptive statistics and two one-way MANOVAs were implemented. The results indicated that the students treated with FC scored statistically higher on the macro-subskills and micro-subskills than the students who experienced conventional instruction. The statistical analysis of the quantitative data revealed that FC was an efficient means of developing writing subskills for the Iranian EFL learners. Moreover, results indicated a certain amount of pedagogical implications for teachers, learners, curriculum designers, and administrators.

Keywords: Active Learning, Conventional Learning, FC Instruction, Writing Subskills

1. Introduction

Writing can be considered as a communicative framework of language teaching. Hence it is fundamentally a collaborative activity between the reader and the writer. That is to say, the ability to cope with creative writing can help EFL students to communicate with ease and clarity. Therefore, good EFL literacy is an important aspect of overall language learning that is important for, instructors, educators, textbook designers, and program developers in foreign language teaching context (Lee, 2003). It is proved that writing is highly challenging communicative skills which require both linguistic and cognitive aspects of intelligence for skillful coordination (Hayes, 1996; Kellogg, 1996). Moreover, dealing with the lower level skills of spelling i.e., cohesion & coherence; grammatical range & accuracy; hence, *micro writing subskills,* and at the higher degree, skills of careful planning and classifying i.e., task achievement & lexical resource; hence, *macro writing subskills* considered as a complicated process (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Consequently, as Farah (2014) stated, second language teaching; thereafter, *L2* literacy skills, is considered essential as well as demanding for L2 literacy educators. Macro versus micro skills has been perceived as essential elements of language (Vaeditn Geert & Steenbeek, 2005). These elements are mutually supportive and mutually consistent in which enhancement in one subsection may lead to enhancement in another subsection.

Brown (2007), has summed up the certain literacy features into two essential subskills: macro and micro subskills. The imitative and intensive aspects of literacy skills apply equally to micro subskills which they tend to explain the literacy mechanics, such as cohesive ties, and past verbs, etc. On the contrary, macro subskill encompasses many widely differing forms of writing as the form and practical purpose of the main idea, supporting idea, written text, accurate and literal interpretation, etc. Consequently, the macro system is not only a word but also the whole written text.

What concerns L2 language writing researchers most is to what extent the roles of micro and macro subskills contribute to becoming effective writers. Since macro and micro subskills are considered as contributors to writing rubrics, as defined by Brown (2007), and applied in standardized and classroom-based assessment, there is considerable debate about EFL literacy pedagogy that center on this question: which is more essential in L2 writing skill development, the micro or macro subskills?

As mentioned above, this study seeks a solution to address the researchers searching for a successful way to its fundamental L2 writing problem in which have noticed the flipped classroom instruction approach to promote the macro/micro writing subskills, and have determined to examine

its beneficial effect on some Iranian EFL learners. Therefore, flipped classrooms; hence, *FC* as a new pedagogical approach, can resolve the students' writing difficulties arising from their different requirements due to their different learning features; moreover, this can greatly be assisting in different learning levels and advanced more students' involvement. Bergmann and Sams (2013), described FC as a pedagogical procedure that transmits component of a traditional face-to-face lectures out of class and develops a learner-driven as well as in-class homework for active engagement. Put most simply, it stimulates activities, traditionally considered as homework, into classroom, which is often supplemented with instructional videos.

FC comprises three key elements of learning: principal of individualized-differentiated learning, learner-oriented instruction, and constructivism, Basal (2015). It is individualized for every distinct EFL learner who examines the material and learns at their own rate, depending on their interests and style (Basal, 2015; Egbert, et al., 2015; Evseeva & Solozhenko, 2015). Being learner-oriented, learners do pair or group work, and value decision-making opportunities which highly involve them in classroom activities (Basal, 2015; Baepler et al., 2014; Bishop et al., 2015, Davies et al., 2013), however, the instructor takes a leading role in discussion than being a lecturer (Basal, 2015; Bishop & Verleger, 2013). The learners assume a central role in their learning (Basal, 2015). Structured class periods improve the students' learning. Teachers can sort the class time out to pay much more attention to each learner individually (Ekmekci, 2017; Evseeva & Solozhenko, 2015) and precisely perceive a slight difference in individuals' learning and basic understanding of information (Roehl, Reddy, & Shannon, 2013). Moreover, as an important feature, the class time includes group work, interactive discussion, and activity verities (Basal, 2015; Egbert et al., 2015; Evseeva & Solozhenko, 2015) that may not be equally applicable to every activity in conventional lecturing style due to the time limit on the curriculum (Egbert et al., 2015; Evseeva & Solozhenko, 2015). As a result, FC addresses different learning styles and students' needs (Afrilyasanti et al., 2016). Therefore, the current experiment presents an investigation into the impact of FC on macro/micro writing subskills. Furthermore, the study raises the research questions as follow:

1. Does FC instruction improve the EFL learners' writing macro/micro subskills?

2. In the case of improvement, does it improve both the macro (Coherence and Cohesion; Task Achievement) and the micro subskills (Grammatical Range and Accuracy; Lexical Resource)?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Flipped Classroom

As a modern technique, FC is a learning way in which students shift from a teacher-centered learning base (Johnson, 2012) to one which the instructors become actual controllers, supporters, and facilitators (Zhang et al., 2014), so the underlying principles of FC instruction are rooted in the theoretical understanding of the EFL learner-centered approach (Clark, 2015). Moreover, the students are actively involved in classroom activities, so the FC instruction follows the Active Learning theory (Meyers & Jones, 1993). Further, the FC model advocates Communicative language teaching and learning theories (Ahmed, 2016), also supported by the Socio-Cultural Learning theory as well as Interactional theory (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The underlying FC pedagogical relevance substantiated by socio-cultural learning theory and interactional theory (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), resulted in Communicative Approach (Ahmed, 2016). In FC, in order to understand the lesson, consistent with the interactional theory, EFL learners cooperate, collaborate, and interact with the teacher.

Moreover, another very impressive theory which has had potentially the greatest impact on the field of foreign language teaching and learning is Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. Put otherwise, according to Richards and Rodgers' (2014) learning theory, in FC, learning comes about through the collaboration between the learners in the classroom while doing the activities and scaffolding. Furthermore, learning occurs commonly in areas which are also rich in interaction, materials (instructional videos, recorded lectures, and online digital instructional materials, etc.) and structured tasks.

In addition, a particular instance of instructional videos used in FCs is Computer or Technology-Assisted Language Learning (CALL/TALL) instruction, to which Vygotsky's sociocultural hypothesis can be utilized because the whole flow and structure of the mental activities underlying the action will change as a result of the incorporation or consolidation of the apparatuses or meditational involvement. One instance of the meditational involvement is computer. (Warschauer, 2005). Moreover, the collaborative educational environment within the L2 study supports the social learning angle of the Vygoskyian hypothesis (Warschauer et al., 1996).

2.1.1. Writing Skill

Writing can be considered as the daunting task for the language learners (Farah, 2014). In fact, a large number of people fully master writing skill. Since writing is a prerequisite for many university majors and future professions, it is considered essential for academic success. Although the spoken discourse rules are developed by conversation and verbal

communication, the major factors governing written discourse are learned by instruction and practice (Richards, 1990). This is closely related to the difficulty EFL learners have in writing too. The difficulties are highly correlated with the linguistic and rhetorical level in terms of accuracy and fluency (Farah, 2014). By Linguistic level, it is meant that the macro and micro levels comprising the syntax or grammatical range and vocabulary or the lexical resource employed in the written response.

2.2. Empirical Studies

As mentioned earlier, few studies have investigated L2 literacy skills as a highly complicated subject in which improvement in one component can strongly influence the other components. Little experimental observation has been conducted to investigate the effect of L2 literacy courses on the development of literacy skills leading to various findings (DeKeyser, 2007; Humphreys et al., 2012; Storch, 2007, 2009).

Farah (2014) contrasted the FC and conventional instruction in terms of writing performance on 12th grade Emirati high school female learners. The discoveries revealed that the FC group performed better than the control group treated with conventional directions. Tohei et al. (2015) conducted a similar study of a FC instruction. They contrasted a conventional English literacy skill using FC with 22 Japanese university learners. The outcomes revealed that the learners, who had been treated with FC, generated significantly larger vocabularies in their essays. Besides, EFL learners who received FC instruction improved their writing proficiency significantly.

There are, however, a number of studies proving that FC instruction is ineffective in educational settings. Choi (2016), reviewed several up-to-date findings of research on FC in English education that confirm the ineffectiveness of the procedure. However, other studies indicate the students' dissatisfaction (Missildine et al., 2013), and burdensomeness of the videos used (Smith, 2013). Tune et al. (2013) claim higher academic performance of graduate students with FC. According to Alvarez's (2012) study with high school students, the results show significant improvement of the FC group on mathematics, science, and social studies. Day and Foley's study (2006) also suggests far superior performance of the FC group in college. In contrast, (Findlay et al., 2014) found no difference in the academic achievement between the groups.

In conclusion, studies of FC conducted abroad and ESL/ EFL contexts are not consistent, and further investigation is required. Hence, the current study aims at investigating the impacts of FC on writing skill, most demanding to EFL students.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The sample used in this study included 78 upper-intermediate level male and female Iranian language learners who were chosen from 150 EFL students from three language schools: Rama, Parto, and Pars, based on their scores on the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT). They varied greatly in terms of age, ranging from 25 to 38, and their educational background, ranging from freshmen to seniors. Finally, they were randomly divided into two groups: control (conventional classroom) and experimental (FC).

3.2. Instruments

In order to homogenize the participants of the study, the first instrument used was the OQPT test (Appendix A) which helped the researcher gain greater insight into the proficiency levels (i.e., elementary, intermediate or upper-intermediate) of the candidates. Accordingly, the participants whose scores ranged 47-55 (out of 150) were assumed as upper-intermediate. The second and yet most significant instrument needed for collecting the data to answer the research questions was an argumentative essay from IELTS Task 2 writing used both as the pre-test and post-test which was based on the students' textbook (Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay, 2011). The objective of the writing course was to considerably improve the participants' macro and micro writing skills. In order to measure their performances on writing, the pretest and posttest were administered on four writing macro and micro subskills including: cohesion and coherence, task achievement, grammatical range and accuracy, and lexical resources both at the beginning and at the end of the course, respectively. The candidates were required to respond to an argumentative essay with at least 250 words in 40 minutes. The rationale behind selecting an argumentative essay was that among the various types of essays, the only one with the whole writing task 2 subcomponents was an argumentative essay. (See appendix B). Further, it should be noted that the test was measured by IELTS task 2 writing band descriptors (see appendix C). To score the test papers, two qualified raters were requested and then the inter-rater concordance was calculated. The consequences are explained in section four. To insure the inter-rater concordance rates, Pearson correlation test was administered with a perceived index found to be .83.

3.3. Procedure

To determine the candidates' level of general English language proficiency and confirm their homogeneity, the OQPT was administered (see Appendix A). The test comprised 55 multiple-choice items which the learners were required to choose and checkmark in an answer grid. The sample pool

comprised 150 male and female EFL participants from whom 78 students managed to score at the upper-intermediate level and hence considered as the research sample in this study. Then, they were equally divided into control and experimental groups. The learners in both groups were required to take a writing pretest to help the researcher measure their writing performances before they were given the treatment. As the pretest, the participants in both groups were asked to write an argumentative paragraph about a topic (see Appendix B) they had chosen from the ones given by the instructor.

In this quantitative study, as the experimental group, one English writing class was selected randomly to write essays following a period of 17 FC instruction sessions. The researcher equipped the class with instructional videos and educational writing screen tasks based on a course titled "*Academic Writing from paragraph to essay by D. E. Zemach & L. A. Rumisek (2011)*". The lesson content was delivered to candidates in advance via WhatsApp or Telegram in a teacher-made pdf format or recorded videos to supply them with the opportunity to learn at their self-paced and get more involved in class activities. The students taking FC were equipped with the Internet, a computer and projector. In addition, the candidates were permitted to use their smartphones in the classroom during learning.

Another English writing class, the control group, focused on teaching writing via conventional instruction. The instructor taught 'argumentative essay section' via giving lectures. Students had no or little knowledge about the lesson before coming to class; therefore, they were taught everything in the class. Several exercises were done in the class, however, the instructor had to spend most of the class time explaining the lesson and hence there was limited time for the writing practice.

For the purpose of the study, 7 units were chosen from *Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay by D. E. Zemach & L. A. Rumisek (2011).* The reason that the researcher selected 7 units out of 9 was that the seven units presented the target topics on macro and micro subskills and the argumentative essay. Units 5, 7, and 11 describe the paragraph unity and opinion as well. Unit 11, for example, elaborates on the importance of unity in L2 writing, and the importance of coherence and creating cohesion. The FC group was required to make themselves ready before class by watching the videos or reading the pdfs. Furthermore, the learners were required to write about the topic they had chosen and answer the questions on the recognition of the four subcomponents of essay writing in the exercises (cohesion & coherence, task achievement, grammatical range and accuracy and lexical resource), which were then posted each session; therefore, the students needed to study their lessons before class and discussing them with their peers. The teacher was able to elicit some information from the students, asked them to discuss the questions in groups of two or three in the classroom

and finally, gave them some worksheets and tests to ensure that all participants had learned the material. On the contrary, the control group received conventional instruction using the same procedure employed in the flipped classroom. A posttest (see Appendix B) was administered after treatment and the outcomes from the pretest and posttest (see Appendix B) were compared and rated by two IELTS instructors assigned as IELTS examiners in Parto, Rama, and Pars schools. The essays of both groups were scored on a scale of 1 to 39.

3.4. Data Analysis

To establish the pretest scores normality for both experimental and control groups, first a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted. The same test was administered to measure the posttest scores of both groups. The descriptive statistics were computed using SPSS version 26. Finally, two MANOVA tests were run to ensure the effectiveness of FC and conventional instruction classrooms on Iranian EFL learners' macro/ micro writing subskills.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

About 78 out of 150 EFL upper-intermediate level participants completed the study from whom 39 had attended the flipped classroom and the rest were 39 students who had attended the conventional classroom instruction. In order to ensure normality of the data gained from the pretest and posttest, the researchers ran a normality test.

4.1.1. Normality of the Pretest/Posttest of EG and CG

Before conducting such parametric tests as MANOVA, the underlying assumptions needed to be tested. The most important assumption was that of normality, which was calculated the learners' performance on the pre-tests and post-tests.

The table displaying all the *p* values lined up under the *Sig.* column of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were larger than .05, so it could be concluded that the scores of pretest and posttest of both groups for all the micro and macro skills (as well as for the overall pretest and posttest scores) formed normal distributions. As the normality assumption is met, it is now possible to proceed with the results of the parametric tests (i.e., MANOVA).

Table 1

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results for the Pretest & Posttest Scores of the EG and CG Learners

Group	Tests	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	*df*	*Sig.*	Statistic	*df*	*Sig.*
EG	Task Achievement Pretest	.25	39	.80	.80	39	.85
	Cohesion and Coherence Pretest	.23	39	.75	.81	39	.75
	Lexical Resources Pretest	.26	39	.10	79	39	.10
	Grammatical Range and Accuracy Pretest	.26	39	.17	.83	39	.17
	Overall Pretest	.38	39	.12	.72	39	.15
	Task Achievement Posttest	.33	39	.67	.73	39	.10
	Cohesion and Coherence Posttest	.40	39	.13	.65	39	.17
	Lexical Resources Posttest	.24	39	.18	.79	39	.19
	Grammatical Range and Accuracy Posttest	.33	39	.20	.74	39	.16
	Overall Posttest	.24	39	.61	.83	39	.68
CG	Task Achievement Pretest	.23	39	.67	.81	39	.18
	Cohesion and Coherence Pretest	.24	39	.18	.79	39	.14
	Lexical Resources Pretest	.29	39	.17	.83	39	.13
	Grammatical Range and Accuracy Pretest	.26	39	.10	.80	39	.12
	Overall Pretest	.47	39	.14	.53	39	.13
	Task Achievement Posttest	.26	39	.18	.84	39	.15
	Cohesion and Coherence Posttest	.28	39	.17	.79	39	.34
	Lexical Resources Posttest	.26	39	.14	.78	39	.10
	Grammatical Range and Accuracy Posttest	.28	39	.10	.84	39	.23
	Overall Posttest	.27	39	.67	.86	39	.85

4.1.3 Pretest Result

Having established that there was no statistically meaningful difference on the pretest among the two groups, the next step was following this up with one-way MANOVA test.

Table 2

MANOVA Results Comparing EG and CG on Writing Pretest Scores

	Value	*F*	Hypothesis df	Error *df*	*Sig.*	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	.12	2.5	4.0	73	.04	.12
Wilk's Lambda	.87	2.5	4.0	73	.04	.12
Hotelling's Trace	.14	2.5	4.0	73	.04	.12
Roy's Largest Root	.14	2.5	4.0	73	.04	.12

According to the data displayed in Table 2, the highest descriptive statistics score belongs to Wilk's Lambda, in which the value of these statistics is .87, with a significance value of 73.000. This is larger than .05 (*i.e.,* .73 > .05); therefore, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups' pretest performance in terms of their overall wellbeing.

4.1.4. Posttest Results

To answer question 1, and find out whether or not exposure to flipped classroom made any significant changes in writing subskills of L2 literacy, another one-way MANOVA was performed on the posttest scores of the participants' performance. The results of the analyses are presented in Tables 3 to 5:

Table 3

Results Comparing CG and EG on Writing Posttest Scores

Writing Subcomponents	Groups	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*N*
Task Achievement	EG	5.4	.68	39
	CG	4.5	.78	39
	Total	4.9	.86	78
Cohesion & Coherence	EG	5.6	.54	39
	CG	4.9	.68	39
	Total	5.2	.70	78
Lexical Resources	EG	5.2	.70	39
	CG	4.6	.76	39
	Total	4.9	.78	78
Grammatical Range & Accuracy	EG	5.3	.74	39
	CG	4.5	.90	39
	Total	4.9	.91	78

The posttest mean score of both groups for task achievement (5.4 vs. 4.5), cohesion and coherence (5.6 vs. 4.9), lexical resources (5.2 vs. 4.6), and grammatical accuracy and range (5.3 vs. 4.5), are shown in Table 4.

In order to find out if the observed differences between the two groups on the four subcomponents of L2 writing were statistically significant, a MANOVA was conducted (Table 4):

Table 4

MANOVA Results Comparing EG and CG on Writing Scores of the Posttest

	Value	*F*	Hypothesis *df*	Error *df*	*Sig.*	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	.52	20	4.0	73	.00	.52
Wilk's Lambda	.47	20	4.0	73	.00	.52
Hotelling's Trace	1.0	20	4.0	73	.00	.52
Roy's Largest Root	1.0	20	4.0	73	.00	.52

The associated *Sig.* value of Wilk's Lambda's was .00, which is less than the significance level (.000 < .05). A *p* value less than or equal to .05, indicated that there was a meaningful difference between the two groups' performance. Hence, there was a considerable difference between the two groups' posttest scores in favor of the composite dependent variable of L2 writing. This means that having received flipped classroom instruction had a substantial effect on EFL learners in terms of their L2 writing achievements, and that the magnitude of this significant effect was very large since the effect size shown under the Partial Eta Squared column equaled .52 based on Cohen (1988, ac cited in Pallant, 2010): .01 = small, .06 = moderate, and .14 = large. Now to answer question 2 and to ensure which of the four subcomponents of L2 writing caused the difference between the two groups, Table 5 needs to be consulted:

Table 5

Test of Between-Subjects Effects for L2 Writing

Dependent Variables	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*	Partial Eta Squared
Task Achievement	8.6	1	8.6	22	.00	.22
Cohesion & Coherence	15	1	15	28	.00	.27
Lexical Resources	5.6	1	5.6	10	.00	.12
Grammatical Range & Accuracy	12	1	12	17	.00	.19

Since we are looking at a number of separate analyses here, it is suggested that we use a more stringent significance level to avoid Type I error. The commonest way is to apply Bonferroni adjustment, which contains dividing the significance level by the number of analyses. In this connection since there were four dependent variables, the significance level should be divided by four (giving a new significance level of .01). The results now are significant if the probability value (*Sig.*) is less than .01. In Table 6, under the *Sig.* column, the *p* values for the cohesion and coherence (.00), task achievement (.00), grammatical range and accuracy (.00), and lexical resources (.00) were all less than .012. This means that the macro skills (i.e., cohesion and coherence and task achievement) and the micro skills (i.e., grammatical range and accuracy and lexical resources) of L2 writing significantly differed in EG and CG due to the treatment provided for the EG participants. In other words, flipped classrooms had significantly positive effects on L2 literacy subskills of the target EFL learners. The effect sizes for all the subcomponents of writing were very large, the largest being for cohesion and coherence (.27), followed by lexical resources (.22), task achievement (.12) and finally grammatical range and accuracy (.19).

4.2. Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the impacts of FC on writing subskills in English as a foreign language and the students' achievement on the FC. Therefore, the following research questions were posed.

Q1: Does FC instruction improve the L2 learners' writing macro/micro subskills achievement?

Q2: In the case of improvement, does it improve both the macro (Coherence and Cohesion; Task Achievement) and the micro subskills (Grammatical Range and Accuracy; Lexical Resource)?

The consequences can be allocated to the following points:

The first research question sought to scrutinize the efficacy of FC on the students' writing subskills achievement. The results of MANOVA test revealed a meaningful difference in posttest results between the control group and the FC group. In other words, FC instruction significantly improved the students' writing performance more than did the conventional instruction, therefore, employing FC in writing programs can be considered to be one of the finest way to improve the EFL students' writing skills. Finally, on the second question verifying the achievements made on macro or micro writing subskills, the results revealed that the participants showed more achievements on macro writing subskills on the posttest than did the participants in the control group, which proves that applying the FC model can contribute toward the achievement of EFL learners. This can be largely due to the fact

that since theoretical part is learned prior to the classroom in the FC model, students have the opportunity to ask questions in the classroom, there also would be adequate time for feedback and reflection and cooperate with the course content during the class.

Furthermore, the research outcomes are attributed to the nature of the FC model that is roughly based on the principle that content attainment is to be achieved outside the classroom and application to be carried out in the classroom. Thus, FC procedure puts the students at the learning center and makes them responsible for content attainment before class time and teachers are responsible for content application. The FC model can further emphasize a collaborative work that improves students' higher-order thinking skills. Moreover, implementing the FC approach allocates more class time to deeper conceptual coverage and peer interaction which greatly enhance the students' communicative competence. As a matter of fact, the FC model is an active process involving interaction in which the instructor directs the learners as they employ the new concepts and creatively take part in the subject matter breaking down the drawback on time and space. It can also help to employ a communicative language teaching approach in EFL classes, which is consistent with the principles of the national curriculum that provides students with the language and   communicative skills as well as problem-solving skills in Language teaching. The distinguishing features of the FC procedure such as the learners' preparation before class (Halili & Zainuddin, 2015; Zappe et al., 2012), also increases the student-teacher interaction (Arshad & Imran, 2013; Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Halili & Zainuddin, 2015; Rutkowski & Moscinska, 2013) and the students are provided with immediate feedback (Arshad & Imran, 2013; McGivney-Burelle & Xue, 2013; McLaughlin et al., 2014; Milman, 2012), which explains the learners' considerable progress. According to Baepler et al. (2014), asking questions, receiving answers and interacting with the course material have a beneficial effect on the learners' achievement. Additionally, the discoveries can be interpreted as a supplementary benefit to incorporate a different varieties of procedures in education, which is to say that it is a blended instruction model and a set of complex class activities, depending upon various aspects of learners' capabilities (Ahmed, 2016).

The results also revealed that if the students' disparity, such as their various expectations and learning styles, are fulfilled by utilizing such classroom techniques as video screen casting in the present study, benefits can be derived (Cohen, 2012; Cahyono et al., 2016; Dörnyei, 2005; Mayer & Moreno, 2003).

The outcomes of this study support the findings of Ekmekci's study (2017) who investigated the effect of FC on the students' foreign language writing skill. The findings revealed that the learners who received FC

treatment showed significantly more improvement than control group. The findings also revealed that the large number of the learners in the FC had positive view about the FC writing model.

Similarly, the findings are compatible with those of Quyên, and Loi, (2018) which proved that the speaking skills improved thanks to the FC model, and had a positive attitude of the model. Moreover, the findings are in line with Ahmed (2016) who studied the impact of the FC on the writing skill in EFL students' attitude towards FC. The findings of the study revealed important difference between the control and experimental post-test scores, in which the experimental group significantly performed better than the control group. Second, there was an important difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the questionnaire application of the experimental group in terms of the post-application. The study was different from our study in that it was performed in the College of Science and Arts for the females of Qassim University with the total number of 1,200 candidates in Saudi Arabia; however, this study was conducted with 79 participants in the Iranian context.

The results are also consistent with those of Farah (2014) who investigated the effect of FC model on the twelfth grade Emirati candidates' writing performance identified as female students' understanding of the FC model in an EFL writing environment. The findings stated an important difference in the mean scores of the experimental group. The students' attitude towards the FC Instruction made a favorable impression at questionnaire. Unlike our study, the control group received treatment in a learner-centered class; however, in our study, the control group received the traditional treatment.

The empirical findings on the effect of FC in language learning are contradictory. However, there has been little research on significant progress of the effectiveness of FC on EFL learners in terms of writing skill (Ahmed, 2016; Ekmekci, 2017; Leis et al., 2015). In his study, Ekmekci (2018) indicates that the students in the FC environment outperform the students in the traditional classroom in favor of writing proficiency. Sohrabi and Mohammadi (2019) noted that FC altogether outflanked the traditional classroom. In contrast, the study by Findlay-Thomson and Mombourquettes (2014) revealed no difference in using FC in the field of academic achievement between the groups. In conclusion, the studies on FC are not consistent, requiring further exploration.

5. Conclusion and Implications

A careful analysis of the related literature on the FC model demonstrates that the model improves the academic achievement in the four

writing subskills and that learners are satisfied with the model (Başal, 2012; Bishop & Vergeler, 2013; Findlay & Mombourquette, 2014; Leis et al., 2015). Unlike the positive effects of FC on teaching establishment, there are studies which prove the ineffectiveness of FC in educational settings (Findlay-Thomson & Mombourquette, 2014; Missildine et al., 2013; Smith, 2013).

Accordingly, it can be asserted that the FC model provides an active learning environment and allows the learners to achieve the learning sources at any time and progress at their own pace, and is an important factor in enhancing the learners' motivation. There are negative attitudes, too, about the FC model, suggesting that the model requires a particular level of readiness, technical information, and skills to prepare videos, which is difficult to determine whether or not learners have watched the videos; and that application of the model is time-consuming (Bristol, 2014).

Additionally, the findings of the analysis provide instructional implications for the teachers who plan to adopt the FC model in their English classes. First, students highly appreciate the new instructional approach. Even though some students' academic performances do not corroborate the effects of the FC, they prefer the approach to the traditional, and perceive the FC as interesting, interactive, motivating, and participatory. It is in line with the Smith's (2013) findings which acknowledge the benefits of the FC even though a review of the online lectures may be time-consuming.

Second, pre-delivered videos or learning materials need to be interesting and concise rather than burdensome for students. Basal (2015) proposes limiting video recording to 15 minutes, incorporating interactive elements in the videos.

Third, teachers need to encourage students to complete pre-classroom tasks and provide additional support for students in case they miss the pre-delivered instruction. Evseeva and Solozhenko, (2015) studies indicate that teachers can provide mini-lectures given after checkup quizzes with face-to-face classroom instruction or allow students to leave shortly for a brief review of the online instruction.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Oxford Placement Test (2018)

Name: _____

This English test consists of 55 multiple-choice questions. We suggest you allow 30 min. to complete the test. Good luck.

1. I come to ………….. Italy.
a. To   b. from   c. at   d. in

b. a. I is a cold. b. I am cold c. I has cold d. I have cold

2. Ann, how are you?
a. I'm a nurse b. I'm fine, and you? c. I am working d. Good

3. Whose key is that?
a. It's of Cate. b. it's Cate's c. it's Cate d. It's to Cate.

4. His office is one the first …………
a. Leve   b. ground   c. stage   d. floor

5. I speak Hebrew and French but Ann……….
a. Don't b. doesn't c. speak d. doesn't speaks

6. I can't find my glasses. Can you look for …….., please?
a. They b. them c. it d. their

7. ………….. there any cars on the street?
a. Are b. is   c. am   d. isn't

8. (On the phone) Hello, Juliet…….
a. Speak b. speaking c. talking d. talk

9. ………… do you go to the gym?
a. How often b. how   c. Where d. Twice a week.

10. I like ……… in my spare time.
a. reading b. read   c. to read d. to reading

12. Chopin ………. Music when he was three.
a. can read b. could read c. can to read d. can't read

13. I ………. Born in 1993.
a. was b. am   c. were   d. is

14. Where ……… Ann and Mary at 6 pm. Yesterday?
a. are b. were c. was   d. have been

15. I went to the bookshop …………… 'Harry Potter'.
a. for buying b. to buy c. to buying d. for to buy

16. He is interested ……….. learning Romanian.
a. in   b. on   c. to   d. for

17. Would you like …………. to drink, sir?
a. anything b. anywhere c. nothing d. something

18. The doctor gave me a ………… for some medicine last week.
a. not   b. recipe c. prescription d. receipt

19. What ………. next weekend?
a. do you do b. are you doing c. will you do d. did you do

20. 'Why are you so hungry?
'Oh, I …………. Breakfast this morning.'
a. didn't have   b. don't have   c. hadn't   d. have

21. Look! The bus…………..
a. are coming   b. is coming   c. comes   d. come

22. 'I have never been to Africa'.
a. Either   b. Neither   c. so   d. No.

23. 'Have you visited Birmingham?'   '…………'
a. Not   b. Ever   c. Already   d. Not yet

24. My mother ………. the carpet when I got home yesterday afternoon.
a. is hoovering   b. was hoovering   c. were hoovering   d. has been hovering

25. My aunt ………… come to our wedding reception.
a. aren't going to   b. isn't going to   c. isn't   d. will

26. I promise I ………… study harder.
a. will   b. am going to   c. may   d. must

27. Is Emma ………. Carla?
a. tall as   b. as tall as   c. taller that   d. more tall

28. Where is ………… chemist's please?
a. the nearest   b. nearer   c. the most near   d. more near

29. Is that purse………….. ?
a. to you   b. you   c. yours   d. your

30. I …….. my mobile phone since 2009.
a. have had   b. have   c. had   d. am having

31. how long ………….. English?
a. are you learning   b. have you been learning   c. do you learn d. you learn

32. We ………. the flight ticket yet.
a. don't book   b. have booked   c. haven't booked   d. didn't book

33. When Simon……….. back tonight, he'll do washing up.
a. will come   b. comes   c. come   d. shall come

34. would you mind ………… the gate, please?
a. closing   b. to close   c. close   d. closed

35. I ………. Smoke when I was 20.
a. use to   b. used to   c. wouldn't   d. couldn't

36. You should …………….. martial arts.
a. get off   b. start up   c. take up   d. take off

37. Could you tell me when………….
a. does the train leave   b. the train leaves   c. does leave the train   d. leaves the train

38. ……… did you travel with?
a. How   b. who   c. whose   d. what

39. Look out! You ………….. off the bike.
a. will fail   b. are going to fall   c. are falling   d. might fall

40. You ……… .. see a doctor.
a. did   b. would   c. should   d. had

41. My mobile phone ……………….
a. has been stolen   b. has stolen   c. have been stolen   d. stole

42. Carla …………… me to go to university.
a. said told   b. made   c. told   d. suggested

43. I've spoken to a buy ………….. father died of cancer last week.
a. who   b. whose   c. that   d. which

44. If I were a prince, I ……………. A palace.
a. 'd have   b. 'll have   c. 'd have had   d. have

45. Drive ……………. Otherwise you'll have an accident.
a. more careful   b. less carefully   c. more carefully   d. much more careful

46. If they ………… next to each other on the plane, they wouldn't
   have got married.
a. hadn't sat   b. had sat   c. sat   d. didn't sit

47. When I got home, someone ……………… the window.
a. broke   b. brokes   c. had broken   d. hadn't broken

48. ………….. the better team, we lost the match.
a. despite being   b. despite of being   c. although   d. despite the fact

49. If only I ……….. richer.
a. am   b. was   c. were   d. have bee

50. I am fed up ……………. This exercise.
a. to do   b. to doing   c. with doing   d. for doing

51. By this time next year, I ………… all my exams.
a. will take   b. will have taken   c. have taken   d. take

52. They have put speed bumps on the road to …………….
a. prohibit   b. prevent   c. avoid   d. forbid

53. You…………… to use your mobile so there's no point in leaving it on.
a. are allowed   b. have   c. aren't allowed   d. can't

54. It was…………. Boring film that I fell asleep.
a. as   b. so   c. such   d. such a

55. She has been …………… of murdering her husband.
a. charged   b. arrested   c. blamed   d. accused

Appendix B
Writing pretest/posttest topic

Test Task: You have 40 minutes to write an argumentative essay. Write 250 words.

Do you agree that modern technology has given us more leisure time than before? Include specific details and examples to support your choice.

Appendix C:
IELTS Task 2 Writing band descriptors

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	* fully addresses all parts of the task * presents a fully developed position in answer	* uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention * skillfully	* uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors	*uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'

	to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas	manages paragraphing	occur only as 'slips'	
8	* sufficiently addresses all parts of the task * presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas	* sequences information and ideas * logically manages all aspects of cohesion well * uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately	* uses a wide range of vocabulary * fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings * skillfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation * produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation	*uses a wide range of structures * the majority of sentences are error-free * makes only very occasional errors or improprieties
7	* addresses all parts of the task * presents a clear position throughout the response * presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralize and/or supporting ideas may lack focus	* logically organizes information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout * uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over- * use presents a clear central topic within each paragraph	* uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision * uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation	* uses a variety of complex structures * produces frequent error-free sentences *has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	* addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others * presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive * presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately	* arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression * uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical * may not always use referencing clearly or	* uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task * attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy * makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication	* uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms * makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication

		appropriately		
	developed/unclear	* uses paragraphing, but not always logically		

5	* addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places * expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions drawn * presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail	* presents information with some organization but there may be a lack of overall progression * makes inadequate, inaccurate or over use of cohesive devices * may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution * may not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate	* uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task * may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader	* uses only a limited range of structures * attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences * may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	* responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate * presents a position but this is unclear * presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported	* presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response * uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive * may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing	* uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task * has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader	* uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses * some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	* does not adequately address any part of the task * does not	* does not organize ideas logically * may use a very limited	* uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word	* attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning

	express a clear position * presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant	range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas	formation and/or spelling * errors may severely distort the message	
2	* barely responds to the task * does not express a position * may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development	* has very little control of organizational features	* uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling	* cannot use sentence forms except in memorized phrases
1	* answer is completely unrelated to the task	* fails to communicate any message	* can only use a few isolated words	* cannot use sentence forms at all
0	* does not attend * does not attempt the task in any way * writes a totally memorized response			

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