



REVISTA KRONOS

Perceptions of Flipped Grammar Learning: A study with B1-level English Students in Ecuador.

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ABSTRACT This paper discusses B1-level English students' perceptions of flipped classroom grammar learning (FL) in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) at a university in Ecuador. It is an action research study, involving 69 B1-level English students across five classes and three instructors, and focused on within-subjects approach where students experienced a non-flipped grammar approach during the first 8 weeks of the semester (until midterm) and then a flipped learning approach (8 weeks). Surveys were conducted at the end of the semester to collect qualitative and quantitative data on students' perceptions of FL in English grammar learning. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with a subgroup of students provided detailed qualitative insights. The results indicated that students generally have positive perceptions of FL for grammar learning as watching grammar videos before class improves their understanding and positively impacts their performance. Although participants mostly prefer a flipped approach to learning grammar, some students expressed concerns regarding technical aspects of tutorial videos. Quantitative results from grammar tests show that students slightly improved their grammar academic performance. Overall, the study concludes that while flipped learning is perceived positively and has academic benefits, further refinement on the approach, particularly in the design of instructional videos, is necessary for optimal effectiveness.

KEYWORDS Flipped learning, English as a foreign language, student's perceptions, learning, grammar.

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Percepciones del Aprendizaje de Gramática en Clase Invertida con Estudiantes nivel B1 (inglés) en Ecuador.

RESUMEN Este artículo explora las percepciones de los estudiantes universitarios de inglés de nivel B1 sobre el aprendizaje de gramática mediante el método del aula invertida (FL) en el contexto del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en una universidad de Ecuador. El estudio es una investigación-acción que involucra a 96 estudiantes de inglés de nivel B1 distribuidos en cinco clases y bajo la instrucción de tres docentes diferentes. El diseño de la investigación adoptó un enfoque intra-sujetos, aplicando una metodología no invertida de gramática durante la primera mitad del semestre (8 semanas) y posteriormente implementando el método de aula invertida (8 semanas). Al finalizar el semestre, se administraron encuestas para recopilar datos tanto cualitativos como cuantitativos sobre las percepciones de los estudiantes respecto al aula invertida en el aprendizaje de la gramática del idioma inglés. Además, se llevaron a cabo entrevistas semi-estructuradas con un subgrupo de estudiantes para obtener información cualitativa detallada. Los resultados indicaron que los estudiantes, en general, mantienen percepciones positivas sobre el aula invertida para el aprendizaje de la gramática, destacando que ver videos de gramática antes de las clases mejora significativamente su comprensión y tiene un impacto positivo en su rendimiento académico. Aunque la mayoría de los estudiantes prefieren el enfoque invertido para el aprendizaje de gramática, algunos expresaron inquietudes respecto a ciertos aspectos técnicos de los videos tutoriales, tales como la calidad del contenido y la facilidad de acceso. Los resultados cuantitativos de las pruebas de gramática demostraron que los estudiantes mejoraron ligeramente su rendimiento académico en este ámbito. El estudio concluye que, si bien el aprendizaje invertido se percibe de manera positiva y conlleva beneficios académicos, es necesario un mayor refinamiento del enfoque, particularmente en el diseño y la implementación de los videos instructivos, para lograr una efectividad óptima en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

PALABRAS CLAVE Aula invertida, inglés como lengua extranjera, percepciones de los estudiantes, aprendizaje, gramática.

INTRODUCTION

The flipped learning (FL) methodology has become a popular approach to teaching reshaping traditional classroom dynamics. By shifting initial learning to pre-class activities and reserving classroom time for interactive engagement, FL emphasizes active student participation and deeper exploration of content. This learner-centered approach has demonstrated potential in fostering independence, critical thinking, and adaptability among students, making it particularly relevant in modern educational settings (Vita & Al-Hoorie, 2023).

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, FL has shown promising outcomes, especially in enhancing key skills such as writing and speaking, while promoting academic resilience (Cabezas, 2021). However, its application to specific areas, such as grammar instruction, remains underexplored, particularly within the Ecuadorian context. This study aims to address this gap by examining students' perceptions of flipped grammar learning in university-level B1 English courses.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the study, the subsequent sections will explore key elements essential to this research. These include the theoretical foundation of flipped learning, the significance of grammar instruction in EFL contexts, the characteristics of B1-level English proficiency, and the role of student perceptions in evaluating educational methodologies. Each subsection highlights critical concepts and their relevance to the research, offering insights into how FL can be effectively implemented in grammar instruction.

FLIPPED LEARNING

The flipped learning (FL) methodology transforms traditional educational paradigms by relocating initial exposure to new content outside the classroom, thereby utilizing class time for enhanced engagement and active learning (Vita & Al-Hoorie, 2023). In this approach, students prepare for class by accessing materials – such as videos, readings, or interactive modules – at their own pace, which equips them for more dynamic classroom interactions. Class activities prioritize discussions, problem-solving, group collaboration, and teacher-student interactions, fostering a more immersive learning environment (HEA, 2024).

FL emphasizes a learner-centered approach, shifting the focus from instructor-led teaching to a participatory environment that enhances student engagement and offers flexibility. This model supports personalized learning experiences as students can access pre-class materials at their convenience (Guayasamin & Inga, 2024). The key elements of FL are the flexible environment in which students select when and where to learn, accommodating diverse learning styles and schedules (Guayasamin & Inga, 2024), learning culture in which classrooms evolve into spaces for in-depth exploration where students can clarify doubts and engage in enriching activities (HEA, 2024), and intentional content which is created or chosen by educators to maximize classroom interaction and concept application (Kwon, 2021). Through these elements, teachers become facilitators who guide collaborative problem-solving rather than merely delivering lectures (HEA, 2024).

Research indicates that FL promotes active engagement and enhances student outcomes by empowering learners to take charge of their education while receiving ongoing support from instructors (Guayasamin & Inga, 2024). This methodology not only enriches the learning experience but also cultivates independence and critical thinking skills necessary for modern educational challenges (Kwon, 2021).

Various studies have investigated the effects of flipped instruction on English as Foreign Language (EFL) students' language skills, revealing promising outcomes. For instance, a study involving Indonesian university students demonstrated significant improvements in

opinion essay writing skills with flipped learning compared to traditional methods (Putri et al., 2024). Furthermore, flipped classrooms have been shown to create a more engaging and interactive atmosphere that encourages greater student autonomy in language learning activities (Izadpanah, 2022; Çiftci Aksoy & Takkaç Tulgar, 2024).

In terms of listening skills, EFL students exhibited improved performance following participation in flipped instruction; post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores (Khoiriyah, 2021). Additionally, FL has been linked to increased academic resilience and self-directed learning among EFL students, suggesting that this approach not only enhances language proficiency but also contributes to overall learner development (Izadpanah, 2022).

While there are mixed findings regarding the effectiveness of FL in EFL contexts, the prevailing consensus highlights its potential benefits in improving language skills and fostering an active learning environment (Putri et al., 2024; Lotino & Ocampo, 2024). Ongoing research is necessary to fully explore the benefits and drawbacks of this teaching strategy, which has gained traction globally. In Ecuador specifically, research on this topic has been advancing in recent years.

GRAMMAR

According to Merriam Webster (n.d.), grammar is defined as ‘a system of rules that defines the grammatical structure of a language.’ Complementing this view, Thornbury (1999) defines grammar as a description of the rules that govern how a language’s sentences are formed, emphasizing its role in effective communication and language proficiency.

In this study, the grammar topics covered correspond to the competencies expected at the upper B1 level (B1.2) according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). These competencies include the ability to use a range of grammatical structures, such as past perfect, first and second conditionals, reported speech, relative clauses, modal verbs for advice, obligation, and deduction, and the passive voice. Mastery of these structures supports learners in producing connected spoken and written discourse, describing experiences and events, expressing hopes and ambitions, giving reasons and explanations, and interacting with a degree of fluency and spontaneity in familiar situations.

B1 LEVEL OF ENGLISH

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) “organizes language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three broad levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User, and that can be further subdivided according to the needs of the local context” (Council of Europe, 2001). B1 stands for the lower stage of independent user where the learner “has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events” (Council of Europe, 2001).

Students in this study were enrolled in level B1.2, which corresponds to level 4 out of 6 in the course sequence at the university where the research was conducted (Level 1: A1, Level 2: A2, Level 3: B1.1, Level 4: B1.2, Level 5: B2.1, Level 6: B2.2). A separate placement test was not administered, as the determination that participants complied with the B1 level can-do statements was based on the institutional course progression system. Students who enrolled in level 4 (B1.2) had previously demonstrated achievement of the

B1.1 (level 3) can do statements by successfully meeting the minimum requirements in both summative assessments (midterm and final exams) and formative assessments (ongoing classroom assessments and assignments) at that level. Furthermore, at the end of the semester, students in level 4 (B1.2) completed a final exam specifically designed to assess their attainment of the can do statements associated with B1.2, thereby confirming their compliance with the targeted competencies.

Regarding needs analysis, at the beginning of the semester, students completed diagnostic tests designed to assess their strengths and weaknesses across listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary, thus identifying their specific learning needs for the course.

PERCEPTIONS

According to Cambridge Dictionary, a perception is ‘a belief or opinion, often held by many people and based on how things seem’ (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). However, in the context of language learning, Wenden (1991) defines learner perceptions as the beliefs and judgments that learners hold about their language learning processes and experiences. These perceptions influence their motivation, strategy use, and overall engagement with instructional methods.

In the context of this research project, the term perception refers to how the participants (in this case, B1-level English university students in Ecuador) interpret, understand, and feel about their experiences with flipped grammar learning. This involves their subjective opinions, attitudes, and beliefs about the method and its impact on their learning process.

Throughout the study, a comprehensive selection of learners’ opinions, attitudes, and beliefs was reviewed. This included their understanding of flipped learning (FL), specifically how students comprehend the concept and methodology of flipped grammar instruction. Students’ attitudes toward FL were also examined, focusing on how they feel about the flipped approach compared to traditional grammar instruction. Additionally, the study explored learners’ personal experiences with FL, including perceived benefits and challenges. The evaluation of effectiveness looked at how students perceive the flipped model’s role in helping them achieve their grammar learning goals. Contextual influences were considered, such as local factors like educational norms and technological access, which shape students’ perceptions of the flipped approach. Lastly, comparisons with traditional teaching methods were made, with students offering views on how flipped learning compares to traditional teacher-led grammar instruction.

RESEARCH GOALS AND QUESTIONS

The primary objective of this research is to explore the perceptions of B1-level university students regarding their experiences learning grammar through flipped learning (FL). The central research question guiding this study is: What are students’ perceptions of learning grammar through flipped learning?

This objective is further explained through two specific aims: (a) To gather data and compare the results with existing studies on the perceptions of B1-level university students of EFL regarding learning English grammar through traditional methods versus the flipped classroom methodology in Ecuador, and (b) to examine how the flipped classroom methodology affects the grammar learning outcomes of B1-level university students of EFL in Ecuador.

The research is inspired by the limited availability of evidence derived from local studies in Ecuador. By addressing this gap, the study offers meaningful contributions not only to the host university but also to the broader community of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors, both nationally and internationally. The findings hope to provide relevant conclusions about the application of this innovative pedagogical approach.

Additionally, this study aims not only to explore the implementation of flipped learning (FL) in B1-level English classes within an Ecuadorian university context but also to propose practical recommendations for its more effective implementation, particularly in terms of video design, instructional content, and student-centered classroom activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Flipped learning, a pedagogical approach where instructional content is delivered outside the classroom while traditional homework activities are conducted in class, has been increasingly adopted in various educational contexts (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015). This approach is particularly relevant in grammar instruction, where understanding and application often benefit from active, guided practice. This review provides a brief synthesis of research on flipped learning in grammar education around the world, followed by a specific focus on Latin America and Ecuador.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The flipped classroom model has gained significant progress in grammar education globally. Studies indicate that flipped learning fosters greater student engagement and autonomy. For instance, a study conducted by Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) found that students appreciated the ability to learn at their own pace and review materials as needed. This autonomy often led to higher levels of engagement during in-class activities (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015).

Research by Zainuddin and Halili (2016) highlights that students perceive flipped learning as beneficial for understanding complex grammatical concepts. The in-class time dedicated to active learning and immediate feedback enhances students' grasp of grammar rules and their application in writing and speaking (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016).

Despite the benefits, technological challenges remain a significant barrier. A study by Bergmann and Sams (2012) noted that unequal access to technology can hinder the effectiveness of flipped learning. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may struggle with accessing the necessary digital resources, which can impact their learning experience (Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

Initial resistance to flipped learning is a common theme. Both students and teachers accustomed to traditional teaching methods may initially find the flipped model disorienting. However, studies such as those by Chen et al (2014) show that with proper orientation and continuous support, students gradually adapt and develop a preference for the flipped approach (Chen et al, 2014). To mitigate initial resistance, it is recommended to implement orientation sessions and provide continuous pedagogical support, especially in early stages of implementation. This can help both teachers and students transition more smoothly into the flipped model (Chen et al., 2014; García & Díaz, 2019).

FL FROM LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

The adoption of flipped learning in Latin America, particularly in grammar instruction, presents unique opportunities and challenges. Cultural, socio-economic, and educational contexts significantly influence students' perceptions and the overall effectiveness of this pedagogical model.

A study by López et al. (2017) involving university students in Colombia found a generally positive reception towards flipped learning. Students reported higher engagement and a better understanding of grammar concepts, attributing this to the interactive in-class activities and the ability to review lectures multiple times (López et al., 2017).

Research in Mexico by Alzahrani (2017) revealed that students perceived an improvement in their language proficiency, particularly in grammar, when engaged in flipped classrooms. The collaborative in-class environment allowed for more practical exercises and immediate feedback, enhancing their learning experience (Alzahrani, 2017).

In Latin America, the success of flipped learning often depends on adequate technological and pedagogical support. For example, a study in Brazil by Almeida and Mendes (2018) emphasized the need for robust technical infrastructure and teacher training to ensure the effective implementation of flipped classrooms. Without such support, students' experiences and perceptions can be negatively affected (Almeida & Mendes, 2018).

Cultural factors play a crucial role in the perception and acceptance of flipped learning. In countries like Chile and Argentina, where traditional lecture-based teaching is deeply rooted, students initially exhibited skepticism towards the flipped model. However, research by García and Díaz (2019) indicates that culturally responsive teaching strategies and gradual implementation helped in overcoming resistance and improving student perceptions (García & Díaz, 2019).

Overall, students' perceptions of flipped learning in grammar education are predominantly positive, both globally and in Latin America. Key factors influencing these perceptions include availability of technology, quality of pedagogical support, and cultural context. Addressing these factors can enhance the effectiveness of flipped learning, leading to better student engagement, understanding, and application of grammatical concepts.

FLIPPED LEARNING IN ECUADOR

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in and application of Flipped Learning methodologies within Ecuador across various educational contexts, particularly in high school and technical education settings. The research on FL within English language education in Ecuador is still in the early stages of development; however, in the last few years, researchers have explored various applications of FL at a university level for enhancing language skills and improving student engagement. Those studies have shown that FL can significantly benefit EFL students at university level by promoting active learning and collaborative practices.

A study conducted by Yanchatipan (2021) at the Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi aimed to enhance the teaching-learning process of English through the FL model among A2-level students. The research identified key challenges faced by students in language acquisition and proposed a set of strategies based on FL principles. By implementing lesson plans that encouraged students to engage with content at home and participate in collaborative classroom activities, the study reported improvements in students' language proficiency and overall learning experience (Yanchatipan, 2021)

Research undertaken by Guayasamin and Inga (2024) at Universidad Politécnica Salesiana examined FL as a tool for enhancing English language skills. The findings indicated that FL fosters an active learning environment, motivating students to take control of their learning process while allowing teachers to act as facilitators. This study emphasized the importance of integrating technology into the classroom to create engaging digital environments that support language learning (Guayasamin & Inga, 2024).

At Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, a quasi-experimental study carried out by Cabezas (2021) focused on the impact of FL on developing speaking skills among A2 level university learners. The experimental group utilized FL strategies such as watching instructional videos at home and engaging in class activities that emphasized grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The results demonstrated significant improvements in the speaking abilities of students who experienced FL compared to those who received traditional instruction (Cabezas, 2021).

Furthermore, a study by Solano et al (2023) explored the effectiveness of FL in distance education contexts and revealed that this approach positively influenced EFL students' listening and speaking skills. Students who participated in the flipped lessons showed a positive attitude towards the flipped classroom strategy. They improved their speaking proficiency and understanding of the target language, which was evidenced by the improvement of their academic grades. The research highlighted how FL facilitates personalized learning experiences, enabling students to progress at their own pace while benefiting from collaborative practices during class time (Solano et al, 2023).

The growing body of research indicates that FL not only enhances language proficiency but also promotes critical thinking and higher-order cognitive skills among university students. By encouraging collaborative learning and active participation, FL helps develop essential communicative competencies necessary for success in real-world contexts (Guayasamin & Inga, 2024; Solano et al, 2023).

Although flipped learning (FL) has shown promising results, several challenges persist in its implementation within Ecuadorian universities. Issues such as access to technology, teacher training, and resistance to change from traditional teaching methods can hinder widespread adoption. Therefore, ongoing professional development for educators and investment in technological infrastructure are crucial for maximizing the benefits of FL in English language education (Yanchatipan, 2021; Marriott Toledo & Sánchez Pérez, 2017).

In general, FL represents a transformative approach to English language teaching at the university level in Ecuador. As more educators embrace this methodology, continued research will be vital in refining its application and addressing potential barriers, ultimately enriching the educational experience for EFL students across the country.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the goals of this study an action research approach was adopted, as it is particularly suitable for addressing real classroom challenges while engaging educators in reflective practice (Efron & Ravid, 2020). In this context, a within-subjects design was implemented to allow the same group of students to experience both instructional methods, non-flipped and flipped learning, enabling a more reliable comparison of their perceptions and performance. Research was conducted with a population of 96 B1 level students across five classes and three English teachers. The semester lasted 16 weeks, with the first 8 weeks dedicated to a non-flipped grammar approach, followed by the implementation of a flipped learning approach starting after the midterm exam in the second half of the semester.

In terms of needs analysis, at the beginning of the semester, students completed diagnostic tests designed to assess their strengths and weaknesses across listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. These tests provided valuable insights into their specific learning needs for the course and helped inform the structure of the instructional approaches.

For the flipped component, teachers selected YouTube videos that met specific criteria, including content accuracy, clarity of the speaker's explanation, quality of graphics and audio, appropriate language level, presence of subtitles, absence of errors, and overall originality and creativity. Videos were required to align with the grammar topics outlined in the institutional curriculum. While length was noted, it was not a primary selection criterion; the quality and relevance of the content were prioritized. Chosen videos ranged from 3 to 15 minutes in length.

The following research tools were used:

- (1) a survey at the end of the semester with the objective of collecting qualitative and quantitative information on the perceptions of university students about the use of the flipped classroom model in learning English grammar at B1 level;
- (2) semi-structured interviews at the end of the semester with a group of students (33% of the total sample) to collect more detailed qualitative information on their perceptions of the use of the flipped classroom model in learning the English grammar at B1 level;
- (3) results of the grammar tests applied (Grammar section of Unit Tests) during the semester which are part of the B1 level curriculum.

This triangulation of instruments was used to gather a holistic result of students' perceptions about learning grammar through flipped learning as well as to evidence their grammar performance.

Potential challenges in this research included the possibility of limited student participation due to the voluntary nature of involvement. This issue was mitigated by teachers in class, who provided thorough explanations of the research objectives and actively worked to inspire students' curiosity. As a result, most students demonstrated a willingness to participate.

Additionally, as the study took an entire semester (16 weeks), there was a risk that the initial number of participants might not correspond to the number of students completing the surveys at the end. This challenge was addressed by teachers who consistently motivated and encouraged students to remain engaged in the study, thereby minimizing dropouts.

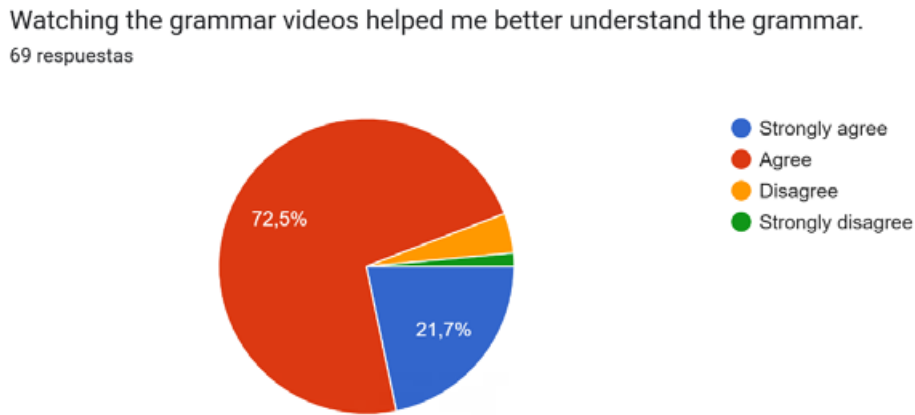
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicate that students' perceptions of flipped learning (FL) for grammar instruction are predominantly positive. The survey data revealed several recurring patterns. One key finding is that watching grammar videos prior to attending class significantly enhances students' understanding of grammatical concepts. Notably, the vast majority of participants (93%) agreed that having prior knowledge of the topic facilitates a better understanding of the teacher's in-class explanations.

These results confirm what other studies have found about students' perception of FL. For example, a study by Hashemi et al. (2021) compared traditional approach and FL instruction that implemented WhatsApp for pre-class grammar videos. The experimental group (flipped) improved comprehension of grammar topics, indicating a favorable perception of this method (Hashemi et al., 2021). Similarly, Hosseini et al. (2017) demon-

strated a positive attitude towards implementing FL for teaching grammar to Swedish students (Hosseini et al., 2017).

Figure 1. Students' responses to grammar understanding

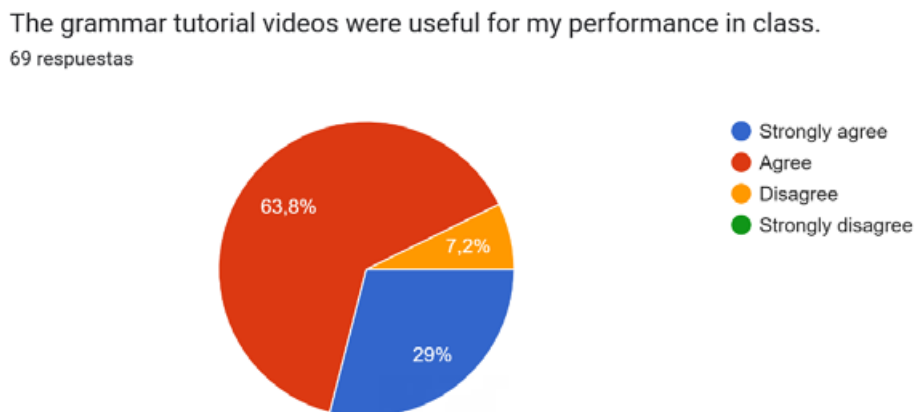


Source: Compiled by the authors

The second common response pattern is the positive influence on students' performance in class as 91% of participants stated that the grammar videos were useful for their class performance. Being able to better understand a grammar topic not only allows students to increase their participation during the class but also gives them the ability to delve into the topic. Students feel more confident in doing the grammar exercises as well as participating in class.

These outcomes are supported by other research findings, such as a quasi-experimental study conducted in Türkiye on 37 students who learned English as a foreign language at a state university. The results provided insights in favor of FL in terms of engagement and performance (Dinçer & Polat, 2022). Similarly, a study conducted in Oman discovered that FL improved learners' self-confidence enhancing overall language performance and class participation (Abdullah, Hussin, Hammad, & Ismail, 2020).

Figure 2. Students' responses to performance in class



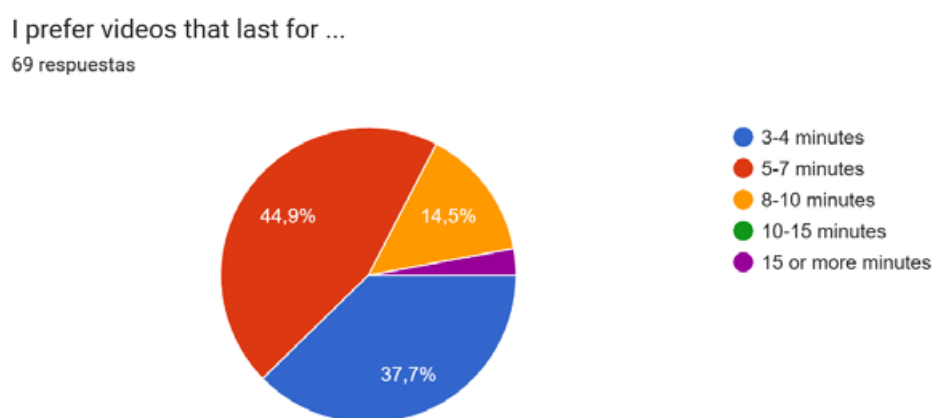
Source: Compiled by the authors

Regarding negative perceptions about FL, the most recurrent response was that some grammar tutorial videos are very long. Over 82% of responses affirm that students prefer videos that are 5-7 minutes long. In the opinion of the students, long videos are more tedious to watch and require extra time. Additionally, 20 % of students would prefer their teacher to make the tutorial videos as they are more focused on the specific topic and aligned to the needs of the students. This shows that although the FL model is mostly seen as positive, there is still room for improvement.

A study by Yu and Gao (2022) confirms these results. It examined the effects of video length on English proficiency, student engagement, and satisfaction, and concluded that the shorter the videos (shorter than 5 minutes), the higher the levels of English proficiency, engagement, and satisfaction. This, overall, indicated that students preferred brief videos (Yu & Gao, 2022).

Similarly, a study by Bakla & Mehdiyev (2022), in which students in an English language teaching methodology course were asked to take turns each week to watch either teacher-created videos or YouTube videos, discovered that students were in favor of teacher-made videos, stating a stronger connection to the content of the course, which enhanced their motivation to engage with the material (Bakla & Mehdiyev, 2022).

Figure 3. Students' responses to videos duration preference



Source: Compiled by the authors

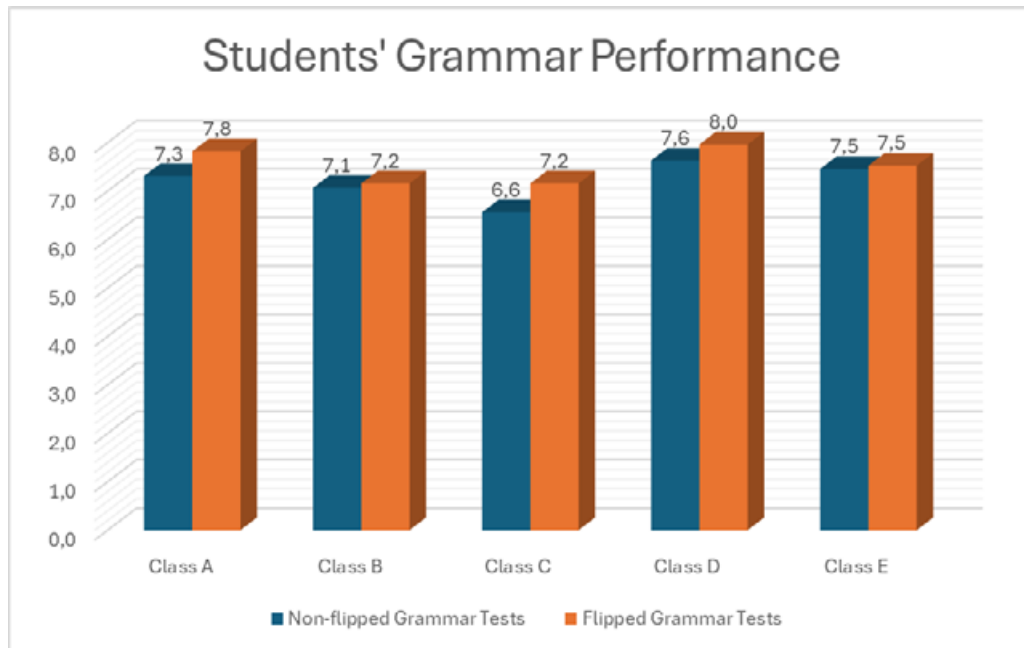
The findings from semi-structured interviews show that the flipped learning model is mostly perceived as a positive influence on students' learning. Overall, students believe that the videos provide them with more preparation which increases their understanding and class participation and improves performance in class. Additionally, many students are willing to continue using videos in their next English course to learn grammar, indicating that they perceive this method as effective for acquiring new knowledge.

Other research studies corroborate these results. For instance, a study by Masruddin et al. (2024) demonstrated that student engagement in the FL class is generally positive compared to those in the non-flipped class. Overall, it suggested higher quality, positive collaboration between student lecturers, increasing interest in learning, active participation in learning and strengthening relationships between students and lecturers (Masruddin et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the statistical analysis of the quantitative results of the grammar tests shows only a slight improvement in students' grammar performance. Although FL was perceived as positive by students, it did not significantly improve their grammar scores in

comparison to non-flipped learning of grammar. This result suggests that the effectiveness of FL can be affected by other aspects, such as students' prior knowledge and language proficiency levels.

Figure 4. Students' grammar performance



Source: Compiled by the authors

Research indicates that students with varying levels of grammatical understanding may not benefit equally from the flipped learning (FL) approach (Dinçer & Polat, 2022). Those with a solid grammar foundation may find FL less impactful on their grades compared to peers struggling with basic concepts, as they might engage less with pre-class materials (Dinçer & Polat, 2022; El-Bassuony, 2016). Consequently, future research in Ecuador should differentiate students' proficiency levels within the same English course.

The quality and accessibility of pre-class materials are crucial for FL success. Students lacking access to high-quality instructional videos tailored to their learning styles may struggle to grasp grammatical concepts effectively. Studies show that engaging and well-structured pre-class content correlates with better performance in class activities (Dinçer & Polat, 2022; Warden, 2016).

Furthermore, teacher support and feedback are essential as effective FL implementation requires teachers to facilitate discussions and provide timely feedback, enhancing students' understanding of grammatical rules. Without adequate support, students may find it challenging to apply what they have learned outside the classroom (Safiyeh, 2020; Shahnama, 2021).

Lastly, student motivation significantly impacts FL outcomes. While active learning opportunities can boost motivation, a lack of intrinsic interest or perceived relevance can diminish the impact on academic performance (Khasawneh, 2022; Kereibayeva & Baisbay, 2024).

All the aspects mentioned above suggest that although this model provides students with a positive experience, it is not a guarantee of outstanding academic excellence. Therefore, it is recommended that flipped learning be implemented alongside differentiated support strategies, such as scaffolding, formative feedback, and learner training in autonomous

study habits. These elements may help bridge the gap between perceived usefulness and actual academic gains, especially in grammar instruction.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Beyond reporting students' perceptions, this study offers evidence-based pedagogical recommendations aimed at improving flipped grammar instruction in EFL classrooms, thereby guiding educators and institutions toward more effective model implementation.

While this study aligns with previous research on the benefits of flipped learning (FL), it contributes to the field of language pedagogy in original and innovative ways through four key aspects.

To begin with, it addresses the relatively unexplored area of grammar instruction within FL in EFL contexts as most FL research has primarily focused on productive skills such as speaking and writing. In fact, a recent systematic review by Hava (2024) confirms this trend, indicating that very few studies in EFL education target grammar instruction specifically.

Additionally, the unique setting of the study adds valuable insight. Conducted with university students in Ecuador, this research provides a perspective from a region that is underrepresented in empirical FL literature, thereby broadening the global understanding of how FL can be adapted to different socio-cultural and educational environments.

Also, the within-subject research design strengthens the reliability of the findings by allowing a direct comparison of student perceptions and academic performance before and after the implementation of FL with the same group of participants. This approach isolates the impact of the instructional method and minimizes external variables; a design rarely used on grammar in EFL contexts despite the prevalence of quasi-experimental designs in FL research (Hava, 2024).

Moreover, the study offers practical pedagogical recommendations regarding the ideal length of instructional videos and students' preference for teacher-created videos. Such pedagogical insights are rarely emphasized in previous FL studies, which often remain at a theoretical level. In doing so, it goes beyond descriptive analysis and contributes actionable insights for the more effective implementation of FL across varied educational settings.

Based on the data collected, this study proposes several practical recommendations for a more efficient use of FL for grammar in EFL contexts. Specifically, the findings suggest six key actions to take to enhance students' academic success.

First, instructors should ensure that students consistently watch grammar videos before class, as prior exposure to the topic significantly improves their understanding of in-class explanations.

Second, short instructional videos should be used, ideally ranging from 5 to 7-minutes in length as, based on students' responses, extensive videos are less engaging and affect learning effectiveness.

Third, the videos should be carefully selected or designed to align closely with course objectives and be clear and engaging, in order to positively impact their class performance.

Fourth, the creation of teacher-made videos which are preferred over generic content. They can connect better with students as they can be tailored to course objectives and learners' specific needs.

Fifth, teachers should develop students' increased confidence and comprehension by incorporating more interactive and practice-based activities during class, allowing learners to apply what they learned from the videos, participate actively, and deepen their understanding of grammar concepts.

Finally, the integration of in-class student-centered activities that promote peer interaction, application of grammar concepts, and immediate formative feedback. These suggestions can be implemented by offering teacher training on digital content creation, establishing quality standards for video materials and designing in-class activities that align directly with pre-class input.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this research indicate that students' perceptions of flipped learning (FL) for grammar instruction are predominantly positive, underscoring its potential as an effective pedagogical approach. The survey data revealed that a significant majority of participants (93%) believe that watching grammar videos prior to class enhances their understanding of grammatical concepts. This aligns with previous studies, such as Hashemi *et al.* (2021) and Hosseini *et al.* (2017), which also reported favorable perceptions of FL among EFL learners.

The results suggest that prior exposure to instructional content facilitates better comprehension of in-class explanations, thereby enriching the overall learning experience. Moreover, the study found a strong correlation between the use of grammar videos and improved classroom performance, with 91% of participants indicating that these resources were beneficial for their engagement and participation during lessons. This enhancement in confidence and performance is corroborated by findings from Dinçer & Polat (2022) and Abdullah *et al.* (2020), which highlight the positive impact of FL on student engagement and self-confidence in language learning contexts.

Despite these positive perceptions, the study also identified areas for improvement, particularly regarding the duration of instructional videos. Over 82% of respondents expressed a preference for shorter videos, ideally lasting between 5 to 7 minutes, as longer videos were perceived as tedious and time-consuming. This preference is consistent with findings from Yu & Gao (2022), which emphasize that shorter video lengths correlate with higher levels of student engagement and satisfaction. Additionally, students indicated a desire for teacher-created videos tailored to their specific needs, suggesting that personalized content may enhance their learning experience.

While the qualitative data reflect a generally positive attitude towards FL, the quantitative analysis revealed only slight improvements in students' grammar performance. This discrepancy indicates that while students appreciate the FL model, it does not necessarily translate into significant academic gains in grammar scores compared to traditional methods, which might be due to factors such as students' prior knowledge and language proficiency levels, quality and accessibility of pre-class materials and teacher support and feedback. To address this, future implementations of flipped learning should ensure that pre-class materials are designed using evidence-based instructional strategies, including microlearning techniques and embedded formative quizzes. Additionally, teachers should receive training in how to monitor and support student engagement with pre-class materials to maximize in-class application and knowledge retention.

Lastly, student motivation and engagement emerged as significant factors influencing the effectiveness of FL. While active learning opportunities can enhance motivation, a lack of intrinsic interest or perceived relevance can diminish the impact on academic performance.

Future implementations of flipped learning should include teacher and student orientation sessions at the beginning of the course to reduce resistance and support a smooth transition into this pedagogical model.

Overall, this study demonstrates that while flipped learning is perceived positively by students and has potential benefits for grammar instruction, its effectiveness is contingent upon various factors including video length, quality of materials, teacher support, and student motivation. Future research should focus on addressing these elements to optimize the implementation of FL in Ecuadorian educational contexts, ensuring that it meets diverse learner needs and enhances overall language proficiency outcomes.

CONTRIBUTOR ROLES

Hamilton Quezada: Conceptualization, introduction writing, results analysis, graph creation, original draft writing, review and editing, final manuscript preparation.

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ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

The authors state that there are no ethical implications.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no financial and non-financial conflicts of interest that could have influenced the work presented.

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