

Degree Thesis 1

Bachelor's Level

Flipped Classroom

A Literature Review on the Benefits and Drawbacks of the Reversed Classroom

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Abstract:

Technology has become an integral part in the realm of education. The flipped classroom is a recent teaching method where students can watch instructional online videos outside the classroom that actively engage them in their learning process. Although this trend has gained momentum in many disciplines and there are many studies available, research behind language acquisition through the flipped classroom model is limited. Still it is implemented by many teachers in the upper secondary school in Sweden. The aim of this study is to investigate the benefits and drawbacks of the flipped classroom in the EFL context and to see if the Flipped Classroom enhances interactive skills in students' language learning. Peer reviewed research articles were used and data has been collected through research behind the Flipped Classroom. The perceptions behind it were divided. Some teachers and students experienced the Flipped Classroom as something positive with regard to availability of material, the promotion of active learning for students and enhancement in language interaction. Along with these, criticism made on this teaching method is that creating material to be available online was time consuming and that perceived an increase in the homework load. As regards oral interaction, both teachers and students felt that it did enhance skills in speaking since preparation before class lead to qualitative time for interaction with the teacher during class, something that was very limited before implementing the flipped classroom model. This review suggests that there is a demand for further studies in the area of English language teaching and English language acquisition in the Swedish context of upper secondary education.

Keywords: Flipped Classroom, Flipped Learning, Reversed Classroom, Blended Learning, Computers assisted learning, inverted classroom, English language teaching

Table of contents:

1. Introduction	1
2. Background	1
2.1. <i>The Swedish Syllabus for English at Upper Secondary level</i>	2
2.2. <i>Definition of the term interaction</i>	2
2.3. <i>Interaction in a classroom context</i>	2
2.4. <i>Characteristics of the Flipped Classroom</i>	3
2.5. <i>Digital competence in the Swedish Core Curriculum</i>	4
2.6. <i>Flipped Classroom and Foreign Language Teaching</i>	4
2.7. <i>Common Tools for teachers Flipped classroom in EFL</i>	4
3. Theoretical Framework	5
3.1. <i>Constructivist theory</i>	5
3.2. <i>Sociocultural theory in interaction</i>	5
3.3. <i>The constructivist theory and the sociocultural perspective regarding flipped classroom</i>	6
4. Material and Methods	6
4.1. <i>Selection Strategies and Criteria</i>	6
4.2. <i>Method of analysis</i>	8
4.3. <i>Ethical aspects</i>	8
5. Results	8
5.1. <i>Presentation of the peer reviewed articles</i>	8
5.2. <i>Content analysis</i>	9
5.3. <i>Arguments in favor of using the Flipped Classroom model in EFL</i>	10
5.4. <i>Arguments against using the Flipped Classroom method in EFL</i>	10
6. Discussion	12
6.1. <i>Method discussion</i>	12
6.2. <i>Main findings</i>	13
6.3. <i>Suggestions for further research</i>	14
7. Conclusion	14
References	

List of Tables

Table		Page
1.	Arguments for using the Flipped Classroom.....	10
2.	Arguments against using the Flipped Classroom.....	10

1. Introduction

Technological advancements in the last century have brought about a digital revolution in the realm of education. Educators face new circumstances in the design of classroom learning, thus resulting in the construction of reversed learning environments for students. The Flipped Classroom is one such method that facilitates learning outside the traditional classroom. The flipped classroom model approaches language use as a primary tool for education, with recorded video lessons that are uploaded online in order for students to prepare for classes by choosing for themselves the time of their learning activity. It was initially introduced by two teachers in biology at Woodland Park High School, in Colorado, in 2007 and has since then become widely used all around the world in different disciplines by educators. Nevertheless, despite the plethora of usage in different subjects, research regarding the usage of the Flipped classroom in language learning and its benefits and drawbacks is limited (Loucky & Ware, 2017). More specifically, it is limited in terms of how the Flipped Classroom enhances students' interactive skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (Hereafter EFL).

In Sweden the Flipped Classroom has become increasingly popular among educators in order to promote language acquisition and this is evident in the plethora of online sources available on the internet and in the 14,000 members in the flipped classroom community “Flippat klassrum” on Facebook. The reason for this breakthrough in Sweden is that educators feel that the flipped classroom enhances students' active learning and also enables quality class time for students and teachers to engage in activities such as interaction and collaborative learning (Hysten, 2016).

The aim of this literature review is to study the benefits and drawbacks of using the Flipped Classroom in teaching English to EFL students at the upper secondary and to answer the following questions:

- What are the arguments in favor of using the Flipped Classroom as a teaching method in learning English?
- What are the arguments against using the Flipped Classroom as a teaching method in learning English?
- Does the Flipped Classroom facilitate interactive skills for students in upper secondary school?

2. Background

The founder of the Flipped Classroom model is Baker (2000), who presented the term at an international education conference. Still, according to the Flipped Learning Network (Network, F.L., 2014), the acknowledged pioneers, who have also written a book, are Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams (Bergman & Sams, 2012), two biology teachers. They support the notion that the flipped classroom does enhance students' performance and facilitates active learning among

students. They have also created the community the Flipped Learning Network (Network, F.L., 2014), which provides updated resources for teachers.

Bråneback in Hylén (2016) points out that the flipped classroom in the Swedish context differs from the American. In Sweden Flipped Classroom is seen by educators as a model rather than a strict method that the Flipped Learning Community supports (2014). In Sweden it is called “*Flippat lärande*” (Hylén, 2016, p. 4) which is Flipped learning (author’s translation). A Flipped Classroom may lead to Flipped Learning but there are certain premises that need to be implemented in order to achieve that. These premises are explained in the section on characteristics of the Flipped Classroom.

2.1. The Swedish Syllabus for English at Upper Secondary level

The subject of English in the Swedish school system became compulsory in 1856 in the natural science track *reallinje* (Hult, 2012). In 1962, it became mandatory for all students in many different school forms. With the globalization of the English language, it is a core subject today in Swedish education policy.

Students in upper secondary school need to develop interactive skills which in turn help them acquire, not just an oral skill for communication, but also high order thinking skills that will be produced in EFL contexts. In this way, students will not only be prepared for classes but also prepared to meet the real world application of the English language (Skolverket, 2012)

According to the syllabus for English at upper secondary education regarding interaction students should also develop:

- Oral and written production and interaction of various kinds, also in more formal settings, where students instruct, narrate, summarize, explain, comment, assess, give reasons for their opinions, discuss and argue.
- Strategies for contributing to and actively participating in discussions related to societal and working life.
- Processing of their own and others' oral and written communications in order to vary, clarify and specify, as well as to create structure and adapt these to their purpose and situation. This covers the use of words and phrases that clarify causal connections and time aspects. (Skolverket 2012)

2.2. Definition of the term interaction

The word “interaction” is defined by the online Cambridge Dictionary¹ as “an occasion when two or more people or things communicate with or react to each other”. In other words, interaction involves certain aspects of speaking that require certain skills by the speaker that not only necessarily means simple production but also skills such as initiating, organizing ideas, discussing, agreeing, disagreeing, explaining, etc. (Tornberg, 2009).

2.3. Interaction in a classroom context

Tornberg (2009) explains that developing oral skills in a different language is a complex phenomenon since there are other necessary components that must correlate such as grammar,

¹ Cambridge Dictionary. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/interaction> Retrieved online 8 May 2017.

pronunciation, intonation, etc. The traditional way of teaching interaction to EFL students is that the teachers follow patterns of rigid didactic and teacher dominated methods. Gibbons (2013) describes the traditional form of interaction in the classroom where the teacher follows an initiation-response-feedback (IRF) pattern² which is basically controlled questions by the teacher with a “foremost goal to control what the students can” (Gibbons, 2013, p. 50, author’s translation). Gibbons explains further that this occurs when the teacher perceives his or her role as transferring knowledge. The flipped classroom seeks to break this trend of the old fashioned way of teaching (Cazden, 2001). Bergman and Sams (2012) point out that the term “traditional Classroom” should not be regarded as an obsolete view of teaching; they stress the necessity of teachers not perceiving it as something negative. Instead they point out that the approach in the traditional classroom is teacher-centered whereas in the Flipped Classroom it is student-centered, which in turn means interaction with the student. Interaction in the flipped classroom aspires to develop students’ skills in differentiating the language of instruction controlled by the teacher into a more individualized learning environment (Loucky & Ware, 2017).

2.4. Characteristics of the Flipped Classroom

The flipped learning network refer to four “pillars” (Network, F.L., 2014). The term F-L-I-P³ stands for:

F- Flexible Environment. It is a custom among teachers to create flexible environments when designing learning, whether it is assigning group work, self-study or research (Selander & Kress, 2010). It is the flexible environment that promotes learning tailored to the student in order to promote language interaction. This also entails that teachers who choose flipping classrooms are more flexible regarding their expectations of student performance, since they adjust to the students themselves.

L-Learning Culture. The traditional teacher- centered classroom instills knowledge only through the teacher as the sole provider of instruction. Through the Flipped Classroom, knowledge is mediated from the teacher to the students, thus making the student more actively involved in his or her learning process. The teacher-centered class changes into an interactive one available for students to accommodate themselves in the language of instruction outside the classroom. At the same time students can reflect upon their learning at their own pace, thus enabling greater understanding and in-depth knowledge in a subject (Network, F.L., 2014)

I-Intentional Content. The teacher provides students with material before the actual lesson. The gains for this approach are twofold: Firstly, the teacher provides students with material before the actual lesson and is able to evaluate the content (Network, F.L., 2014)

Secondly, the teacher takes advantage of the time for interaction in the classroom by using active learning strategies and for the student to develop in-depth understanding.

² IRF explained by British Council online source. <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/initiation-response-feedback-irf>. Retrieved online 15th August 2017

³) Network, F. L. (2014). The four pillars of FLIP .Retrieved online 12th May 2017. http://flippedlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FLIP_handout_FNL_Web.pdf

P- Professional Educators. In order to implement the flipped learning method, educators are required to develop certain skills in order to shift from being at the center of the classroom to the flipped. The teacher needs to take into account the type of learners in the classroom, considering factors such as background, socio-economic status, cognitive skills, proficiency in language and also availability outside the classroom of obtaining knowledge in a certain discipline (Arfstrom, McKnight, McKnight, & Yarbrow, 2013).

2.5. Digital competence in the Swedish Core Curriculum

With respect to society's fast development in technology, digital tools have become an integral part in people's lives. This has affected education and schools must adjust to the technological advancements of today. In March 2016 the Ministry of Education and Research presented a new proposal namely an IT strategy regarding incorporating digital competence in the Core curriculum and instructions for schools to organize digitalization in their institutions. The main objectives are that Swedish students in all school forms need to obtain knowledge in and understanding of digital tools and media, to understand what a digital society entails, have a critical and responsible approach towards digital tools, problem solving and to implement ideas (Skolverket, 2011/2017)

2.6. Flipped Classroom and Foreign Language Teaching

Flipped Classroom initially began being implemented in science classes (Bergman & Sams, 2012). In foreign language education the Flipped Classroom has only been popular for a few years (Loucky & Ware, 2017). Flipped Classroom is a further development of the original Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Language teachers around the world use it not only to develop classroom-centered skills such as speaking, writing, listening etc. but also skills that are necessary for today's society in the acquisition of language (Loucky & Ware, 2017). Examples of such skills are learner autonomy, digital technology, language learning strategies and communicative language (Loucky & Ware, 2017). Bishop and Verleger (2013) explain that Flipped Classroom should be separated into two parts which are "interactive group learning activities and individual instruction outside the classroom" (2013, p. 5). They point this out in order to show for educators that communication is the core idea when using this method and thus enhancing students' performance in communicative skills (Hylén, 2016).

2.7. Common Tools for teachers Flipped classroom in EFL

In order to understand the flipped classroom in the context of EFL one must understand primarily the tools used for creating a flipped classroom (Loucky & Ware, 2017). Through the flipped classroom teaching model and the assigned tasks before class, teachers can support students and provide them with different questions before class. To enhance interaction specifically, instructional online videos are most common and there are many free programs for teachers to use in order to create their own videos; some of them enable teachers to create questions which students can answer beforehand, thus assessing themselves and reflecting upon their choices. Whatever the outcome they have, they can bring this later to class and discuss it with their teachers. There are also programs where teachers can directly see students' responses which in turn enables the teacher to receive feedback in order to assess students' performance.

Many videos enhance communicative skills where students can watch before the class and then practice in class (Loucky & Ware, 2017). Digital methods in EFL are a result of the limited time teachers have in classrooms; therefore, teachers must find other resources in order to design instructional learning. Still, a culture of sharing material, especially many available in the Flipped Learning Network or other social media enables teacher to find material useful for students (Hamdan, P. Mc Knight, K. Mc Knight, & Arfstrom, 2013).

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical perspectives that have been used when conducting the analysis are constructivist theory and sociocultural theory.

3.1. Constructivist theory

Traditional classrooms are often teacher centered. It is the teacher that plans the content, instruction and evaluates the outcomes of the students' own learning process. Students are supposed to passively sit in a classroom and follow the teacher's instructions. This is opposite to the constructivist approach regarding language acquisition and teaching methods. In the constructivist theory knowledge is something individual that is constructed solely by the individuals themselves. Understanding of a subject is a process where people follow a natural development to construct their knowledge (Säljö, 2014). This means that students actively construct meaning and it is only the student that is responsible for his or her learning. Piaget, who is considered to be a representative of the constructivist theory, supports the idea that knowledge is developed when the individual can observe the surrounding environment. (Säljö, 2014). This is a more progressive approach than that of the traditional classroom since active participation in learning is a postulate according to the constructivist theory (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). In the constructivist theory, the teacher's role is to scaffold and create the premises for students' learning and successful achievement. Scaffolding in the constructivist theory could be explained as creating learning situations where the teacher's role is to simplify his or her knowledge and instill that knowledge to the learner by offering and suggesting the tools for acquisition of awareness in a subject (Gibbons, 2013)

3.2. Sociocultural theory in interaction

It is widely known among educators in Sweden that Vygotsky has been a source of inspiration in the Swedish educational system. This is also evident when reading the Swedish curriculum (Säljö, 2014). Vygotsky is considered to be the pioneer in the sociocultural perspective of learning; his theory is based on the fact that literacy can only be obtained through social interaction and that the learning environment is a social, cultural meeting place (Säljö, 2014). Interaction is the communication between people that plays an integral part in people's linguistic development. Language acquisition is a psychological process where people's cognitive skills are developed through the development of a relationship. Language is not something static; instead it develops through interaction because language transforms into a meaning (Tornberg, 2009). In other words, it becomes "internalized" (Washburn, 1994, p 71). Vygotsky's term *Zone of Proximal Development* ZPD is explained by Lindberg (2013) as the distance between the actual developmental level for independent problem-solving and the

potential level of development which is determined by guidance and support of a knowledgeable instructor. In other words, it is the area between a human being's consciousness and the surrounding world, as well as the zone in which the individual is susceptible to instructions and explanation. This also means that the person who obtains knowledge relies on the instructor's expertise. The instructor asks in turn questions and points out important information. In this way, learning takes place through the interaction between the learner and the expert (Säljö, 2014).

3.3. The constructivist theory and the sociocultural perspective regarding flipped classroom

Bishop and Verleger point out that “constructivism and collaborative learning stem from Piaget's theory of cognitive conflict, and that cooperative learning stems from Vygotsky's zone of proximal development” (2013, p. 6). In other words, the two theories differ in perspectives of learning; the constructivist theory deals with engaging students and making them more active in their learning process while the the sociocultural theory is about developing learning through students' socialization (Liberg, 2013). To Vygotsky the human being is in constant evolution and receives knowledge in different contexts and situations, whereas Piaget considers that intellectual development happens only when the human being is in a “cognitive imbalance” (Säljö, 2014 p. 305) and has to change the way he or she regards the surrounding world. It is certain though that both perspectives infuse a certain change in the student, a transformation of knowledge through the support of an instructor or a mode of instruction which in this case is the flipped classroom. Moreover, both theories support the idea of scaffolding the student inside the classroom through the increase in time allotted for the student (Hamdan et al., 2013), and outside the classroom where the student can study at his or her own pace. Therefore, both theories are applicable in this literature review regarding Flipped classroom since, in a flipped classroom context, they both share the idea which is focus on student-centered learning (Bishop & Verleger, 2013)

4. Material and Methods

This literature review will serve as the basis for an empirical study in the flipped classroom in the future in order to further study what methods and EFL teachers use in order to enhance interaction by the means of flipped classroom. The section below will present the method used for this literature study.

4.1. Selection Strategies and Criteria

According to Eriksson Barajas, Forsberg, & Wengström (2013) there are strategies a researcher can use in order to find appropriate articles to answer the research questions. In this research a “purposeful sampling” (p. 137) is used because the goal is to find the characteristics of the Flipped Classroom.

This thesis is a systematic literature review. The data was collected through different search engines which were *Google Scholar*, *Summon* and *ERIC*.

Initially, in order to receive tips on search words, papers written by other students were used to see examples of references. From the reference lists, it was possible to determine what articles were relevant and reliable. After that, the search engine *Google Scholar* was used, to search only for peer reviewed articles. In this way the availability and reliability of the sources were validated (Eriksson Barajas et al., 2013). In *Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC*, the search words used were “flipped classroom”, “flipped learning”, “computer assisted education”, “flipped classroom and EFL”, “reversed classroom”. The results were many, but in the realm of EFL were limited.

The researcher searched in the Swedish context by using the Swedish definition of flipped classroom “*flippat klassrum*” and “*flippat lärande*” but the results only gave papers by other students and no peer reviewed articles which could be used in this thesis (Eriksson Barajas et al., 2013). Due to the limited material to use for this paper, the researcher posted a question in Swedish to the Swedish community *Flippat klassrum* in Facebook to ask for more tips and information regarding peer reviewed articles and was referred to the website *The Flipped Learning Network* which in turn suggested research conducted in the realm of Flipped Classroom.

The term “blended learning” was also included because flipped classroom teaching can be perceived as a form of blended learning since it is based on instructional videos students are assigned as homework. In the realm of blended learning, it falls into the category of adding to Blended learning (Bergman & Sams, 2012). However, Blended learning and the Flipped Classroom provide different experiences from the traditional classroom, and in this review the phrase “blended learning” was excluded in order to limit the massive amount of publications on the topic and not risk losing focus in the subject of the review.

When reading the different titles, the articles selected were those that included the words “EFL”, “English as a second language”, “TESOL” (Teaching English to speakers of other languages). Thereafter, the abstracts were read and if the abstracts suited the research questions for this paper then a second stage followed which was to read the first part of the articles in order to find the theoretical framework used. After that, a full read of the articles was made in order to find out which texts analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the Flipped Classroom in the articles and which mentioned interaction. In the end, six sources were selected.

In Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), it is clearly stated that a literature review “must be formative and lead into, or give rise to, all aspects of the research: the field, the particular topic, the methodology, the data analysis and the implications for the future research” (2011, p. 112). Regarding upper secondary school in Sweden, no articles were found that explicitly referred to this level of English. Also, most articles discussed the Flipped Classroom in higher academic levels such as university but since the level of English corresponded to the level of English in the Swedish upper secondary school, the material was considered useful to the researcher.

4.2. Method of analysis

According to Eriksson Barajas et al. (2013) the purpose of an analysis in a systematic literature review is to identify and present “the core subject that is being researched” (p. 146). In this study a content analysis has been performed in order to systematically categorize the content of the sources investigated, in order to find ideas and concepts in the articles that may help in answering the research questions (p. 148). An overview was made for each study to categorize the arguments for the flipped classroom and those against. In the same overview, a column for interaction was included. The categories were selected based on the statements of the strengths and weaknesses found in the sources, and they were separated into students’ arguments for and against the flipped classroom and teachers’ arguments for and against the Flipped Classroom. Through categorizing, the researcher could easily find clues and receive a clearer image of what each text supports which in the end facilitated the presentation of the results section. After that two tables of analysis were made. One table of analysis has been used in order to identify the main concepts of the articles, as well as a second separate table of analysis for the articles that described the benefits and drawbacks. A separate table of the articles that mention interaction or interactive skills and a specific table for articles focusing on EFL were created.

4.3. Ethical aspects

Eriksson Barajas et al. (2013) point out that there are some ethical aspects one should take into consideration before performing a literature review. Regarding the selection and presentation of the study Eriksson Barajas et al. point out that the researcher should present the results objectively and not change anything for the benefit of the author’s own opinion, thus giving the views that support the research hypothesis and views that do not. These ethical aspects must be taken into account in order to ensure the quality of the results (p.69-70).

5. Results

In this section a short presentation of the chosen articles is given. After that a separate section will follow in order to answer the research questions.

5.1. Presentation of the peer reviewed articles

Alsowat, Hamad. (2016) An EFL Flipped Classroom Teaching Model: Effects on English Language Higher-order Thinking Skills, Students Engagement and Satisfaction. The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of the Flipped Classroom in EFL on graduate students’ English higher order thinking skills, engagement and satisfaction and the relationship among these variables based on Bloom’s taxonomy⁴. The participants were 67 female students at the Taif University in Saudi Arabia who were graduate students studying a general English course. They were representing two classes which were separated into an experiment group and to a control group assigned with activities and tests for higher order thinking skills. The findings

⁴ Bloom’s taxonomy explained in Encyclopedia Britannica’s online source <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Blooms-taxonomy> retrieved 25 June 2017.

showed the importance of shifting from the traditional classroom to a more flipped method such as the flipped classroom.

Chi Cheung, R. Y. (2017). An Investigation of the Use of the "Flipped Classroom" Pedagogy in Secondary English language Classrooms. The aim of the study was to examine the use of the flipped classroom in the English language subject in secondary classrooms in Hong Kong. The study was conducted with 57 students and two teachers from two secondary classes in a Band 3 (Grade 8) secondary school. Findings were collected through participants' replies in a questionnaire and by semi-structured interviews.

Hung, H. T. (2015). Flipping the Classroom for English Language Learners to foster Active Learning. The study is a posttest-only quasi experimental study where lesson assessments, students study logs, questionnaires were used to investigate the impacts of flipped teaching on students' learning by using the WebQuest⁵ active learning strategy. Participants were first year English majors from a Taiwanese university taking courses in communicative English.

Mehring, J. (2016). Present Research on the Flipped Classroom and Potential Tools for the EFL Classroom. The aim of the study was to examine research behind flipped learning in the EFL classroom in Japan, in order for EFL teachers to better understand the Flipped Classroom Model.

Ramazani-Bauer, C., Graney, J. M., Marshall, H., & Sabieh, C. (2016). Flipped Learning in TESOL: Definitions, Approaches, and Implementation. The article describes the benefits and drawbacks of the FCTM approach in TESOL. The article discusses how flipped learning is defined and how to make it effective when promoting language acquisition through a project at the Saint Michael's College in Vermont, United States where students obtained "content outside classromm and then interacted in class with the instructor and peers" (p. 433). This led to combining face to face instruction by the teacher and a form of blended learning since students were supposed to also work on line. The article also describes the benefits and drawbacks of flipped classroom.

Webb, M., & Doman, E. (2016). Does the Flipped Classroom Lead to Increased Gains on Learning Outcomes in ESL/EFL Contexts?. The study is a two year experiment that investigates whether the flipped classroom can lead students to increased gains in learning outcomes in ESL/EFL in Macau, China, and the US with a total of 39 students participating. The participants in both countries were high intermediate level respectively. Data was collected through grammar tests. The researchers of the study suggest a need for flipped curriculum and material design for EFL and ESL teachers around the world.

5.2. Content analysis

In this section the main findings will be presented regarding the aim and the research questions. Two tables are used to in order to identify patterns and main concepts. After each table a short

⁵ *WebQuest* is explained by Hung (2014) as an active learning strategy "a lesson plan format which contains five major components: Introduction, Task, Process, Evaluation and Conclusion" (2014:82)

comment follows with the main ideas of the arguments for and against. After the tables, an in-depth explanation of each reviewed article chosen will follow.

5.3. Arguments in favor of using the Flipped Classroom model in EFL

Table 1. Arguments for using the flipped classroom

Arguments for	Alsowat (2016)	Cheng (2016)	Hung (2015)	Mehring (2017)	Ramazani et al. (2016)	Webb & Doman (2016)
Promotes active learning	X	X	X	X	X	X
It develops generic skills on students		X				
Enhances language interaction	X		X	X	X	
Students can work at their own pace	X	X	X			X
Motivational	X	X	X			
More qualitative time in class with the teacher	X	X	X		X	X

Table 1 show that all studies unanimously agree that flipped classroom promotes active learning. Four out of six find that the Flipped Classroom does enhance interaction and the same number show that students can work at their own pace and that they experience more qualitative time with their teachers. Only one study explains the benefits of generic skills students obtain through the Flipped Classroom which will be discussed below.

5.4. Arguments against using the Flipped Classroom method in EFL

Table 2. Arguments against using the Flipped Classroom

Arguments against	Alsowat (2016)	Cheng (2016)	Hung (2015)	Mehring (2017)	Ramazani et al. (2016)	Webb & Doman (2016)
Time consuming for the teachers to prepare or find appropriate material		X			X	
Does not promote language acquisition		X				
Only for motivated students		X			X	
Does not enhance language interaction						
Homework load		X				
More suitable for other disciples than language learning		X				

Table 2 shows that arguments against the Flipped Classroom are quite divided. Only two studies found that teachers experienced this method as time consuming when preparing or searching for appropriate material for their students. Also the same two studies refer to the fact that the Flipped classroom model might be suitable only for the motivated students. None of the articles found that interaction is not enhanced.

Alsowat (2016) in his quasi experimental study focused on the student's perspective. The findings of the study showed that the Flipped Classroom provides a more collaborative and cooperative classroom, thus making students' active learning and higher order thinking skills more effective and it increases foreign language higher order thinking skills. It also reveals the importance of shifting from meeting the teacher physically to a more flipped instruction outside the classroom in order to engage students' involvement in their learning.

Cheng (2017) in her triangulation investigated both teachers' perspective and students' perspective. The two teachers agreed that the Flipped Classroom model is a more creative way of enhancing knowledge but not necessarily in language interaction. Instead they felt that Flipped Classroom would be more suitable for grammar lessons. One of the teachers felt that Flipped Classroom would only work for the really motivated students. A concern was also expressed by the teachers regarding the workload. They felt that Flipped Classroom not only required certain skills from teachers but also a lot of time for lesson planning such as preparing their own flipped material or searching for other material, such as appropriate videos online made by others. Another interesting point made was that the teachers felt that through the Flipped Classroom some students may develop generic skills, more specifically, 77.6% of the students felt they could "transfer" (p. 9) skills learned by the flipped classroom into other subjects.

Hung (2014) in her study came to the conclusion based on findings that flipping the classroom does engage students' before class and after and that learning outcomes are positive. However, the study did not reveal how much influence it had on the students. Still, since adopting new technologies in education is nowadays a common phenomenon among teachers, the flipped classroom is an auspicious way to encourage active learning.

Mehring (2016) in her study points out how flipped classroom enhances collaboration and interaction in the classroom. This was evident in the findings with Japanese EFL students who wished to change the traditional teaching method. They felt interaction was limited during classes and that the Flipped Classroom model increased their opportunities to interact in the target language. Mehring refers to a previous study made in 1988 by Hino where students felt that they could seldom speak the target language by expressing an opinion on different topics that required critical thinking. Mehring considers that the flipped classroom is the answer to this problem.

Ramazani-Bauer et al. (2016) point out that the effects of the flipped learning environment are time effective for teachers in the realm of student engagement outside the classroom.

Simultaneously, this is also one of the drawbacks mentioned since this is only implemented by the very motivated students who actively take responsibility for their learning outcomes. Another drawback that is mentioned is the equipment required by schools and teachers, and the administration of them is considered to be time consuming.

6. Discussion

6.1. Method discussion

Since the researcher did not have any prior experience in conducting a literature review before, there were many challenges. As stated in Eriksson Barajas et al. a systematic review should present all the evidence in an area (2013, p. 28). In a thesis this small in scope and on a topic where there was limited research to find, especially in the Swedish context in upper secondary school, it was a demanding task for the researcher to compile previous research. This was something the researcher had not foreseen before choosing a topic when searching for previous studies. The reason for this was that the researcher was misled by there being thousands of members of the flipped classroom community and the Swedish Law of Education paragraph 1 chapter 5 (SFS 2010:800), where it is explicitly stated that “all teaching should rest on scientific proof and experience” (the author’s translation). It was presumed that the Flipped Classroom has scientific evidence from the Swedish context. In the end the lack of peer reviewed articles on Flipped Classroom in the Swedish context contributed towards raising awareness of the fact that more evidence based research must be carried out in Sweden since the method is avidly used (Hylén 2016), as suggested below.

As regards to the research questions, Cohen et al. (2011) point out that in a literature review the focus must be “clear and limited” and to “limit the scope and scale of the research” (p. 113). This was the reason the researcher decided upon describing benefits and drawbacks of the flipped classroom. It would enable the researcher to organize the literature review in a clearer way and eliminate findings easier in the studies that were of no importance to answer the research questions.

Eriksson Barajas et al. (2013) point out that it is necessary to present all the evidence found but the studies chosen had many different kind of approaches to collect their data. The researchers for the chosen articles had all made extensive studies and they have used both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Regarding the theoretical framework, the term “active learning” was something the researcher had prior knowledge of since it a term is frequently used in Flipped Classroom communities, as a result this term was stated in articles where constructivist theory is used (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). On the other hand, while searching the sociocultural theory was also mentioned in some articles as regards to the term interaction. This term is a highly Vygotskian approach in the realm of enhancing second language acquisition, therefore the choice was made in order to also use it in the researcher’s theoretical framework (Loucky & Ware, 2017).

6.2. Main findings

All researchers in the articles agree that the Flipped Classroom promotes active learning meaning that students involve themselves in their learning process and receive greater ownership of knowledge in their subject (Bergman & Sams, 2012). This perception is held by students and teachers respectively (Yarbro, Arfstrom, K, Mc Knight, K., & Mc Knight, P. 2013), (Hylén, 2016). However, it must be said that Cheung's (2017) article focused on flipped classroom in teaching grammar, not oral interaction, but could still answer the questions of the pros and cons of using flipped lessons. Cheung (2017) points out though that the study was conducted over a very short period of time, therefore the results may not be representative since they showed that students performed only slightly better in grammar tests. Interestingly, Cheung's article is also the one article that mentions most drawbacks compared to the others. Some examples are that teachers in Cheung's article found that flipped classroom is motivational only to the really motivated students. This also supported in Ramazani et al. (2016) who conclude that flipped classroom works best on the motivated students. In the Flipped Classroom context though, and referring to the four pillars of Flipped classroom, the Learning Culture (Hamdan et al., 2013) is of utmost importance in order to motivate students for studies. Accomodating for learning encourages students to actively involve themselves in their learning process. Alsowat (2016) and Hung (2014), on the other hand, found that students and teachers were very motivated and enthusiastic since both articles mention positive attitudes of students especially. The reason for this difference in the results of the articles was that the flipped classroom in Cheung's article may not have been representative since it was only used in two classes and by two teachers which could be a limited number to achieve valid results.

Another interesting point that Alsowat (2016), Hung (2015), Mehring (2016), and Ramazani (2016) et al. all agreed on was that the flipped classroom does enhance interaction since more class time is freed up due to the fact that students have come prepared to class beforehand. In this way more scaffolding by the teacher and time for collaborative activities is used in the classroom. This is also supported by the sociocultural theory regarding language acquisition. Interaction is enhanced if students and teachers have the opportunity to exchange views and discuss productively over a phenomenon (Hylén, 2016). Also, as mentioned earlier, the teacher as expert and the student as the learner create a meaning (Tornberg, 2009) in the classroom and this meaning does not necessarily have to be interrupted if the teacher can provide material for the student outside the classroom. This does not mean that students receive explicitly a boost in their interactive skills but instead implicitly since more time is freed up for the teacher with the students than in the traditional classroom. In other words, it does implicitly enhance interaction but not in the sense of enhancing the skill of oral interaction. Ramazani et al. (2016) and Hung (2015) point out that more flipped material needs to be developed in order to actually practice speaking skills.

Five out of six articles also claim that the flipped classroom enables teachers to have more qualitative time with their students. It is widely known, especially in the Swedish context, that teachers feel that they do not have qualitative time with their students since there are so many other things that need to be incorporated during class. Hylén (2016) has reported statements of

teachers saying that they have more time with their students than in front of their students (p. 6). According to Hung (2017) since time is freed up, the teacher is able to give individualized instruction. This is also discussed in Webb and Doman (2016) who argue that one of the greatest difficulties a language teacher may have in class is time allotted for individualized instruction.

In the revised Swedish core curriculum for upper secondary level it is stated that schools are responsible for each student to use modern technology as a tool for searching for knowledge, creativity, communication and language learning (Skolverket, 2011/2017). This entails that teachers' profession is changing into a more instructional role. The tools are many and are developing very fast (Loucky & Ware, 2017) All articles agreed that more research needs to be done in the realm of the Flipped Classroom. Mehring (2016), Alsowat (2016), and Ramazani (2016) et al. also point out that there is also a need for creating tools for the teachers in order to help teachers design their classes

6.3. Suggestions for further research

The analysis and discussion in this thesis indicate that the benefits of flipped classroom outweigh the drawbacks. The limited findings in the realm of EFL at the upper secondary level, and especially the fact that no evidence based research has been scientifically carried out in Sweden despite the many teachers who use flipped classroom model, render it necessary to investigate further the flipped classroom model. This can be done by looking into teachers' and students' perceptions on The Flipped Classroom model, the tools that are used and most importantly to investigate whether it enhances language acquisition in a foreign language.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to find out the benefits and drawbacks of flipped classroom in the realm of EFL at the upper secondary level in Sweden and also to investigate if flipped classroom does enhance interaction. For this thesis the following questions were asked: What are the arguments in favor of using the Flipped Classroom in EFL? What are the arguments against using the Flipped Classroom in EFL? And Does the Flipped Classroom facilitate interactive skills for students in upper secondary level?

The conclusion of this review is that flipped classroom has both benefits and drawbacks. There is an agreement between all researchers in the articles that the flipped classroom does promote active learning and provides a more qualitative time during class for individual instruction to the students. Regarding interaction, it is agreed by most researchers that it does enhance interaction. On the other hand, interaction should not be perceived as practicing the skill of interaction. Instead most articles pointed out that interaction is enhanced due to the freed up time available since students prepare for class in advance. Regarding drawbacks perceptions were not unanimously agreed upon among the researchers, but one point made by all was that there is a need for further research and more tools for teachers in order to create flipped classroom material.

Regarding the Swedish context there is no evidence found, even though the flipped classroom is widely used by language teachers in Sweden. However, this paper might help in pointing out

that there is a necessity to further investigate the matter and start a discussion regarding the using scientific and experienced based knowledge in Sweden on the topic of the Flipped classroom.

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