

The effect of flipped classroom model on learner autonomy from non-English majored students' perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Learner autonomy cultivation has been one of the key considerations of educators. Contributing to this attempt, this qualitative research aims to investigate college students' perspectives on the application of the flipped classroom model, which was developed to increase autonomous learning during class and beyond. Students are encouraged to finish computer-based activities that provide them with target grammar points and vocabulary prior to class time while teachers will facilitate further learning practices and discussion in the classroom. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 19 non-English major students aged 20 and 21 studying at the same institute in Ho Chi Minh City. The results showed that this model has a positive effect on participants' autonomous learning ability before and after the class sessions because the model creates an interactive learning atmosphere. This paper, in general, can be considered a useful reference for both learners and educators in regard to the applicability of the flipped classroom model to foster students' autonomous learning and their involvement inside and outside the class.

1. Introduction

It is undeniable that language plays an important role in the current setting, serving various purposes ranging from small talk to business-related issues. The need to use language critically increases as a result of globalization, in which language is the bridge between people of different cultures. English, as a mutual language, inevitably becomes a compulsory piece in Vietnam's comprehensive curriculum, and even in the tertiary program (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). However, the insufficiency of class time or in-class skill practice opportunities might limit students' English competency (Hu & Zhang, 2017), thus affecting their future development, both academically and professionally. Therefore, to ameliorate this nationwide situation, students are encouraged to invest more extracurricular time in studying. Hence, long-term practice helps students develop learning autonomy, which is not only good for them during their schooling phases but also during their later work since people are always expected to be active, skillful, and independent (Phan & Hamid, 2017) with limited official training. Considering this, learner autonomy is urgently needed in language learning accomplishment as a deciding element (Littlewood, 1999; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). Similarly, Henri, Morrell, and Scott (2018) indicated that most courses at universities include learner autonomy fostering as an essential component of the learning process.

Regarding the characteristics of learner autonomy, Henri et al. (2018) also mentioned that there are diverse points of view. Scott, Furnell, Murphy, and Goulder (2015) advocated that it can be adjusted due to its idiosyncrasy while Connell, Donovan, and Chambers (2016) argued for its ability to improve through students' long-term active practices. Additionally, although some learners notice the significance of learner autonomy, most of them need more guidance and training on how to positively possess and effectively practice autonomy (Hu & Zhang, 2017; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). Phan and Hamid (2017) also stated that it is necessary to provide students with an autonomous nurturing environment in which they can optimize their self-learning skills. However, Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) also claimed that not all Vietnamese tertiary students spend their time studying the English language after school correctly and efficiently. Not only that, in-class participation could have been better than complimented.

In conventional classes, preparatory reading can be assigned; however, those pre-assigned tasks will be re-covered in class (Yang, 2017). Additionally, the interference of conventional teaching methods, including assigning compulsory homework and examination and the shortage of supportive guidelines, restrict the growth of learner autonomy (Nguyen & Stracke, 2021). On the contrary, in the autonomy-oriented teaching approach, students are offered chances to control their learning themselves (Phan & Hamid, 2017). Consequently, learner autonomy can be gradually improved. According to Yang (2017), the flipped classroom model is a personalized environment of learning, which is considered a key characteristic. Thanks to this autonomy-oriented and technology-based approach, lectures are delivered online and students have opportunities to explore it themselves in pre-class at any time and any place, which is to leave room for official class time for brief reviews and other inquiry-based and student-centered activities. In other words, this approach gives opportunities for the practical use of knowledge (He, Holton, Farkas, & Warschauer, 2016). As a result, active learning is expected to be developed in this model.

Hence, this research aims to investigate the effect of the flipped classroom model, on the enhancement of learner autonomy and their engagement in study activities in and outside class. The students' perspectives on this issue will be explored through two research questions:

1. What are the effects that the flipped classroom model might have on freshmen's learning autonomy?
2. How does the flipped classroom model motivate first-year university students to participate in learning inside and outside the class?

Although this study may have a humble contribution to the academic context, it is expected to be relevant to educators and students as reference material regarding the improvement of learner autonomy and the application of the flipped pedagogical approach to their teaching and learning issues. Especially, for those who are getting trouble with boosting their student's motivation and class learning atmosphere, this paper hopes to be a feasible solution.

2. Theoretical basis

2.1. Learner autonomy in language learning

Learner autonomy is by no means a new issue among educators. Several authors discussed its importance and referred to it by various names. Hu and Zhang (2017) used synonymic terms such as 'independent learners', 'self-study' learners, and 'self-regulated learning'. Successful learners should obtain autonomy in their learning, which represents their ability to control their

own learning (Holec, 1981; Shi & Han, 2019). Zainuddin and Perera (2019) believed that these metacognitive learners are capable of setting learning goals and targeting their necessary content. Specifically, they are engaged in the process of planning, monitoring, assessing, and questioning their own learning (Hu & Zhang, 2017; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). Nguyen and Stracke (2021) claimed that the autonomous learning process of students is recognized when they show an expectation for their learning identity and attempt to use suitable learning strategies both in class and beyond the class context.

Regarding the definition of learner autonomy in language learning and teaching context, Littlewood (1996) depicted a learner with autonomy as an individual owning an independent capacity to make decisions and process their choices, thus actively administering their actions. He referred to ability and willingness as two main factors included in this capacity. The author discussed these two vital elements in detail as follows. Willingness involves learners' confidence and motivation to take responsibility for their learning decisions. At the same time, ability describes the combination of knowledge that helps select the most appropriate option with careful consideration and skills that are required to complete the established choices. According to Littlewood (1996), a student successfully achieves their learner autonomy when two significant factors present themselves together. A student, for example, might have a strong motivation to study outside class, yet their knowledge of learning strategies or time management skills is insufficient. Consequently, the learner apparently fails to practice their autonomous learning. In other words, these two elements are dependent on each other. The more knowledge and skills the learners have, the more willing they are to independently make decisions and perform them. Conversely, the more confident and motivated the learners are, the more knowledgeable and skilled they will try to become. Similar to this definition of Littlewood (1996), Shi and Han (2019) illustrated learner autonomy as a constructive process that is built on three essential characteristics. The creation and growth of autonomy include learners' attitudes, motivation for learning, and ability to learn independently using suitable strategies.

Concerning the difference in students' autonomy practice, Littlewood (1999) categorized them into reactive and proactive autonomy. While the reactive level tells that learners are dependable on their classroom policies and curricular requirements to complete their autonomous learning, students at the proactive level, which is considered a higher level of the former, are expected to totally or partially control their process of learning, from setting targets to evaluating afterward.

The integration of in-class and out-of-classroom learning is believed to significantly contribute to the success of a student (Nguyen & Stracke, 2021). It is undeniable that classroom-based studying is limited due to the fact that both teachers and students have to keep pace with the established curriculum in insufficient time and deal with the shortage of access to study materials. As a result, additional learning that occurs outside the classroom is recommended to compensate for the above-mentioned disadvantages of in-class learning. With the promotion of blended learning, which employs Information and Communication Technology (ICT), researchers have collected more evidence on how supportive computer-based learning helps provoke motivation and reflection on learning (Tsai, 2019). In this way, the flipped classroom model can be viewed as a potential teaching model that fosters learning autonomy.

2.2. The model of the flipped classroom

As indicated by Littlewood (1996), learners are encouraged to actively participate in setting, implementing, and evaluating their learning. However, they should not be left alone on this journey.

Educators, especially teachers who are directly in touch with them in the classroom should play a crucial role in guiding and assisting their learners (Sheerin, 1997). Therefore, introducing and conducting the appropriate teaching approach should be involved in teachers' responsibility.

It is undeniable that the advancement of technology has brought numerous opportunities for teachers to be creative in their teaching and managing classes (He, 2020), which includes the introduction of the flipped classroom model. This model is known as a variation of the blended learning mode (Dong, 2016; Nguyen, Tan, & Lee, 2018; Kim & Yoon, 2021), which is the integration of offline and computer-based learning (Tsai, 2019). Created in this way, this teaching model aims to offer students a more flexible and dynamic learning environment and promote their engagement in learning activities (Dong, 2016; Tsai, 2019). According to Nguyen et al. (2018), in this model, students are given chances to be exposed to and practice the upcoming content before the offline sessions, which helps students evaluate their learning and correct their mistakes. The form of material that students work on before class could be varied such as audio tapes, videos, and Powerpoints slides. The main focus is that the order of learning in traditional classrooms, which expects students to comprehend the lessons with teachers in class and then do follow-up practice later, is reversed (Kim & Yoon, 2021). Consequently, Tsai (2019) believed that in-class time can be exploited for more meaningful learning activities such as discussing and clarifying concepts and other hard-to-understand information, solving practical problems, and language skills practice (Başal, 2015). With more time to mention and applying the knowledge, students could better acquire the lectures (Kim & Yoon, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2018; Tsai, 2019). Kim and Yoon (2021) supposed that there are more chances for collaborative and active classroom learning activities since the lessons have been researched by all students before class. In 2014, Albert and Beatty (2014) generalized some characteristics of the flipped classroom model, including (1) the facilitation of technology, (2) the reversal of teaching and learning order, and (3) the shift from passive to active learners. Additionally, Enfield (2013) and Dong (2016) praised this model for providing students with more opportunities to develop interactive learning and autonomous learning habits as students expose themselves to new content before listening to the teachers, thus being beneficial from more in-class time for interacting with classmates using the target language.

With the introduction of the flipped classroom model, He et al. (2016) and Yang (2017) figured out some merits of this teaching approach. To begin with, the interaction between teacher and students and among students is expected to be improved thanks to the more class time investment in this aspect because teacher talking time is significantly reduced. Enfield (2013) assumed that optimizing class discussion time and other different activities in flipped classrooms might offer students more opportunities to support one another in language learning and familiarize themselves with challenging tasks. Secondly, when students are allowed or requested to finish the tasks themselves before class, they have adequate time to absorb the lessons at their own pace (He et al., 2016; Yang, 2017) rather than pushing themselves to understand everything within a session in class. The application of ICT in the flipped classroom model may support students by providing them with various interactive lectures and learning materials for previewing and reviewing, in which students can repeat and rewind the sources until they are ready for the upcoming offline sessions (Enfield, 2013). Hsieh, Wu, and Marek (2017) also pointed out that the time used for self-study in this model could be considered higher quality than that of traditional extra-curricular self-studying. Thirdly, students are more engaged in classroom activities when they attend flipped classes (He et al., 2016; Yang, 2017). According to Hung (2015), activeness is the key factor that contributes to the success of a flipped class. Learners are given space and time for their active roles

in learning and be independent to work on classroom activities without teachers' too-detailed models. Ayçiçek and Yelken (2018) indicated that although the correlation between students' achievement and their practice of the flipped classroom model was not strong, the engagement levels of students were higher. It was probably because of the fact that they had more opportunities to interact with their teachers and peers independently of class space and time. Then, by strictly following the policies of the flipped classroom framework, students can establish and develop their learner autonomy and self-regulation (He et al., 2016; Yang, 2017). As stated by Mehring (2016), diverse sources of learning materials should be combined to facilitate students' learning process. Thus, they could be willing to spend more time on self-learning and better engage in class.

On the other hand, some authors argue for the inefficient use of this classroom model in some situations. Based on the findings of Singh, Jacob-John, Nagpal, and Inglis (2021), international students who were joining their undergraduate program in Australia faced considerable challenges pertaining to language, technology, and autonomy development when first attending this kind of class. Firstly, students who did not have English as their first language found it challenging to pre-watch or pre-read sources to acquire the knowledge prior to teachers' simplified explanation. Secondly, international students, predominantly Asian, are more accustomed to conventional classrooms in which teachers' instructions are the main sources of learning and students postpone their practice until teachers impart relevant knowledge. Therefore, students hardly find the motivation to complete pre-class exercises. Finally, the fact that surveyed students were unfamiliar with the online learning system offered by the university caused demotivation in online learning. These obstacles were also figured out by Nguyen et al. (2018), who mentioned that students might confront difficulties regarding self-controlled study, anxiety about overloading, and inadequate punctual support and online resources.

As mentioned, several studies have been conducted around applying the flipped classroom model in English as foreign language teaching and motivation promotion in different parts of the world such as America (Enfield, 2013), Hong Kong (Yang, 2017), Turkey (Ayçiçek & Yelken, 2018), Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2018), and Australia (Singh et al., 2021). Numerous positive effects related to students' English language achievement were indicated (Abdullah, Hussin, & Ismail, 2019; Hung, 2015), yet similar drawbacks remain (Nguyen et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2021). Although flipped classroom model application in Vietnamese contexts has just received the attention of researchers in recent years (Huynh & Nguyen, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2018), several papers have been done to examine its effect on students' achievement; hence, significant suggestions have been offered to enhance the practice of this model. It is generally advisable for teachers to include both audio and visual materials in the pre-class assignments, provide students with punctual support, and maintain asynchronously interactive learning while they are self-studying (Huynh & Nguyen, 2019; Mehring, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2018). This paper aims to contribute to the existing studies by planning a course in line with some of the aforementioned recommendations.

3. Research method

3.1. Research design

This qualitative research employed interviews which are suitable for collecting opinions. The semi-structured interview (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018) provided opportunities for the participants to share their attitudes more thoroughly. With open-ended questions and two-way communication throughout the interviews, the researchers were able to elicit more information

from the participants. The inherent questions were broad with a view to avoiding leading the thoughts of respondents. The thematic analysis approach (Gibson & Brown, 2009) guided the coding process, facilitating underpinning ideas identification.

3.2. Participants and setting

The participants included 19 second-year students, majoring in electrical engineering and telecommunications at a state university in Ho Chi Minh City. They had enrolled in two courses of General English, in which they were expected to develop English skills comprehensively. Each course lasted 08 weeks, including 30 periods of offline learning and additional online learning time. All of the participants were male, aged between 20 and 21, which reflected the acceptable gender ratio of technology-majored students in Vietnam. Their English level was considered lower-intermediate.

The courses employ an English workbook, which is accompanied by an account of an online study program. The guidelines on how to use the platform were sent to students one week prior to the first offline session. They were encouraged to read and finish the targeted assignments. The first-in-class period was spent on familiarizing students with new study mode first-in-class period was spent on familiarizing students with new study modes and answering existing questions pertaining to pre-class tasks. As stated in the syllabus, students are assigned the online units prior to the offline session. They are required to complete up to 80 percent of the online assignment as proof of their attempt. During class time, teachers are not expected to go through the theoretical lessons, yet the workbook and handouts supply students with more oral and written practices accordingly, in which teachers' roles are facilitators and activity controllers.

Regarding students' learning tasks, they finished online exercises about the upcoming topic, including listening to relevant audio scripts, watching videos, and reading short passages to answer questions before class day. Students also read a short piece of writing and answered some multiple choice questions to explore the ways of writing before they initiate and make their own pieces. They listened to a recorded voice pronouncing new vocabulary and repeated it. After that, there was a short mini-test after their practice to check their memory. As students work on the assignments themselves, they could post questions regarding mechanical issues or exercise instruction comprehension to the class chat group, which had already been created at the beginning of the course.

During class time, the teacher organized activities to help students review and apply new words using four language skills. One of the sample products of students was a piece of writing such as restaurant reviews and role-playing waiters and customers at restaurants. Students recalled their memory of online preparation as models for their language production and added their own ideas. However, students are usually encouraged to create their own version. Yet, some 'weak' students often stick to the model and change the information at the word level. Through the process of writing and speaking in class, the teacher checks students' comprehension and corrects their misunderstandings. Generally, the teacher did not stick to the explanation of useful language or input before students' production, thus leaving students with more time to work on their own.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 19 students. The survey invitations were sent to the students immediately after their completion of the second course with the aim of timely capturing their impressions. They were encouraged to voluntarily share their thoughts as the answers would not affect their final course results.

All the interviews were conducted via email after participants had been approved to join the study. Students were informed about the process of study and understood that their requests to withdraw from the study could be posted at any time. On receiving the questions, respondents had seven days to fill out the answer forms and submit them to the teacher. Some reasons for postponing responses were considered but remaining silent longer than a week represents students' unwillingness to join, and the interview with that student stopped. After the forms were returned, participants continued answering clarification questions about their responses if necessary. The asynchronous conversation continued to ensure that the questioner collected adequate data for theme coding in case the original answers had been surprisingly short and unclear. The final script included the original questions and further explanation.

Regarding the data collection instrument, participants received a list of 10 open-ended questions with compatible follow-up questions written in Vietnamese, considering the level of students who had difficulty expressing themselves complicatedly in English. These interview questions focused on students' preparation, participation during and after the flipped class, and their difficulties.

To analyze the data, the writers mainly employed the thematic analysis approach (Gibson & Brown, 2009) to thematize the significant ideas from the responses of 19 participants. Themes regarding attitudes and students' understanding of the model were extracted from each answer. The responses were not analyzed separately, but rather in parallel to each other; hence, the writers could discover the similarities and differences, thus showing the trends and patterns among the students. Themes were coded crucially regarding the students' pre-, while, and post-class behaviors. The themes from individuals were, finally, tailored together to highlight the mutual opinions among surveyed students.

4. Research results

4.1. The influence of pre-class activity on student's perception of learner autonomy

Based on the data coded from the interview, students considered the pre-class activities contributed to their enhancement of autonomy. All students shared that they did have preparatory work including watching videos and doing practice activities on the ED learning platform. Clear task and time division was one of the reasons for this action as noted by Student 2. He found that it was suitable and logical when lectures were delivered one day before the official sessions. The contents for preparatory activities were clearly assigned, which made him well-acknowledged on specific tasks to complete before the class started as he added. Pre-lesson activity also gave students opportunities to actively watch relevant videos and lectures on their self-learning platform, and autonomously search information according to delivered materials. Students 17 and 18 had a similar point of view that they found their learning much more attractive and motivating because of interesting video lectures uploaded on the ED learning platform. Moreover, searching for new information for more understanding was indispensable as Student 17 emphasized.

Thanks to the instructor's digital resources delivery, learners show their appreciation regarding the flexibility in organizing their own time for learning (Wood et al., 2021). As a result, they could confidently discuss and deeply understand a certain issue in class as Student 13 added. He confirmed that the preparatory tasks on the ED learning platform played a significant part in his autonomous learning improvement. According to Tsai (2019), various learning styles can be customized thanks to a variety of learning materials. Subsequently, the learning process of learners

can become more adaptive, flexible, and autonomous as the author added. In other words, the support of ICT and the advancement of Internet technology brings users opportunities to become active and independent learners. Moreover, electronic lectures, or digital resources in general, made students more engaged in their own learning and increased chances to customize their learning approach, compared to text materials, because students can pause or rewind at any time (Enfield, 2013; Gross, Schmid, Gettinger, & Melzer, 2016). Hence, students can pay more attention to the lecture if they wish to and have higher motivation and better learning outcomes (Gross et al., 2016). These sharings align with what Benson (2011) had found. The acknowledgment of the importance of pre-lesson learning plays a crucial role in students' autonomy. As a consequence, those who are into this task can have better achievement in their academic journey. In summary, there is a positive response regarding this pre-task in the flipped classroom model.

Interestingly, it was undeniable that two students still hold the feeling of being compulsory when faced with pre-class activity. An enjoyment in the task, however, was noticed. The view of Student 17 enlightened this point.

“With the flipped classrooms, it is a bit compulsory at first. However, it is a useful and unique lecture video that makes my learning much more enjoyable. Searching for new information is indispensable, too.” (Student 17)

Holding a similar viewpoint, Student 13 recognized that tasks such as watching video lectures and searching for information in advance should be well-prepared to better understand and discuss in official sessions. Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002) investigated that there is a two-way relationship between autonomy and motivation. Learners need motivation for their learning prior to the initiation and regulation of their study behaviors. Vice versa, it is the benefits of autonomy that push, give direction, and raise students' learning motivation. In other words, compulsory situations in the flipped-classroom model, at first, have formed students' autonomous learning ability and helped them maintain it along with their engagement.

Albeit positive, approaching a new learning mode seems to bring students considerable challenges regarding pre-lecture activities. The most commonly noticed issues belong to new experience, time management, and searching skills. Even though there was clear instruction on how a flipped class runs, Students 14 and 16 found it difficult to get familiar with this new learning approach. Besides, lots of students recognized that their preparatory tasks were sometimes affected due to the late delivery of learning materials and the lack of time. Student 2 shared that his preparation was not, sometimes, good enough to meet the pool of knowledge in the in-class discussion. Being in a quite similar situation, Student 18 had difficulty appropriately and correctly preparing for questions and in-class discussion topics in a short time. As a consequence, English, reluctantly, became their first and foremost consideration compared to other subjects in the semester, which directly influenced their academic performance.

“I sometimes only focus on learning English. I ignore or have no appropriate plans for previewing the lessons of other subjects. As a result, my test scores in those subjects were average”. (Student 2)

Searching skills are also considered another challenge in the flipped-classroom model. Students 3, 6, and 13 had struggles with finding and searching essential materials as their preparation when they came to a wide selection of reference materials. Therefore, they had a

feeling of loss because of no idea about the starting points and missed some important information for the class discussion as well.

These sharings resonate with the research of Nguyen and Stracke (2021), which indicated a negative consequence from a viewpoint of teacher's responsibility in traditional classes. Some learners, themselves, were not ready for their learning goal establishment, material choices, learning strategies decisions, learning progress control, and knowledge exploration. Learner autonomy is shown in case the learners hold insight into the variety of learning styles and strategies (Thanasoulas, 2000, as cited in Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). Harmer (2007) added that students may face challenges in controlling their learning if they do not have an awareness of how their learning works. In other words, students' autonomous learning can be raised when learners recognize and possess learning styles and strategies for themselves.

In general, in the pre-class activity in the model of flipped classes in this study, it seems that the learners do acknowledge the autonomy; however, it is seen as reactive autonomy. It aligns with the statement shared by Littlewood (1999). Those who possess a reactive level of autonomy depend on their teacher or curriculum in directing their learning to achieve their goals.

4.2. The influence of after-class activity on student's perception of learner autonomy

When making a comparison of students' revision activities between non-flipped and flipped classes, 18 out of 19 students shared that they did review the lessons in both learning modes. However, 06 students among them emphasized that, in the flipped classroom model, their reviewing process was much easier and more autonomous due to the fact that they had already had chances to carefully and deeply explore lectures both in pre-class and in-class activities, which aligns with Student 17's sharing. As a result, it was not a challenge to recall and absorb the knowledge. According to Wood et al. (2021), students' learning can be enhanced thanks to the combination of digital resources, lecture captures, and in-class activities. The use of given digital resources and the choice of materials were connected with the type of information that learners were looking for and the ease of gaining that information.

Additionally, Student 18 held a similar idea in addition to the classmates' assistance, which helped his after-class revision be easier and more enjoyable. Besides, this activity was considered a contributing factor to the student's improvement of autonomy as Student 19 stated. Seemingly noticing the importance of this revision stage, students 13 and 14 also had plans to pay more attention to their learning after classes. This statement aligns with what Dong (2016), Phan and Hamid (2017) claimed. Not only are learners given opportunities to autonomously explore knowledge themselves via lectures and learning resources, but they can also actively exchange knowledge through an interactive and communicative learning environment. As a result, the learner's autonomous learning skill can be effectively and efficiently improved when different learning strategies are figured out.

More importantly, Student 2 realized that persistence was a prerequisite and motivational factor in his English learning process. An individual who has motivational persistence will motivationally continue to explore personal resources to overcome difficulties along their journey by effortfully trying to achieve a personal goal (Bostan, 2015). Ertem and Ari (2022) implemented that there is a positive link between motivational persistence and achievement orientation in learners. Those who have a learning orientation will learn since they would like to learn. They have the purpose of improving knowledge, skills, behaviors, and strategies. This sharing also

added to Schunk (2007)'s statement. He noted that perceived enhancement in acquiring skills and the wish to continuously study ensure the continuance of self-efficacy and motivation. And it seems that persistence can be considered a contributing factor to students' autonomy development.

4.3. The relationship between the autonomy and student's participation in the flipped classroom model

It is reasonable that, due to the in-class time expansion, the flipped classroom model gives the class opportunities to be enthusiastically and ebulliently exposed to the variety of in-class activities compared to the non-flipped classes. No specific activities were announced to learners prior to their in-class meetings, so they found it fascinating and were willing to join the sessions. More importantly, as Student 2 shared, those activities, such as quizzes, required them to autonomously explore information at home so that they could be able to deal with such tasks, which got his attention more to the pre-class significance, he added. Besides, Students 3 and 5 shared a similar viewpoint which was about their flexibility in in-class activities thanks to good preparation of tasks for the official sessions in advance. As a result, it is understandable that students found their learning more autonomous, active, and confident when coming to the in-class session (Students 9 and 18). In other words, it shows the confidence of students in their learning process, which is one of the willingness components in the learner autonomy framework identified by Littlewood (1996). Benson (2007) indicated that learner autonomy asks for the ability to show responsibility for learning purposes. And active participation of language learners plays a crucial role in their learning process to reach the aim of improving autonomy. To Shi and Han (2019), learner autonomy can be seen as a constructive process.

Gradually, the flipped classroom model seems to have a positive influence on students' perspectives regarding their learning goals. Compared to the non-flipped classes, the ways they learn now have changed in terms of their preparation before official classes. Even though all students completed their session preparation in advance as discussed above, 17 over 19 students did acknowledge the significance of preparatory tasks before the class meetings. Hence, they gradually try to complete tasks on the ED learning platform and autonomously explore language and learning skills online with motivation as Student 5 shared. Student 10 also stated that well-searching for information and doing preparatory tasks in advance was to have a better understanding of lectures and better in-class interaction with their lecturer. Additionally, Students 13 and 17 recognized that they should learn for knowledge, not for grades only. As a result, there was a change in their autonomous learning strategies which is about basic understanding and lesson-relevant inquiries for self-research at home and the readiness for in-depth discussion and creativity in class. Consequently, there seems to be an alignment with the idea that the students can express their confidence and engagement to study at their own pace, choose materials, and decide the appropriate learning mode themselves once they recognize their learning aims and strategies (Tsai, 2019).

The in-class discussion also contributes to the learner's autonomy in addition to the pre-class activity. There was a one-way sharing in terms of knowledge in non-flipped classes because merely lecturers knew it as students noted. Thanks to the flipped format of a session, the in-depth discussion between lecturer and students was considered more efficient and effective, Student 13 shared. The discussed topics range widely from learning skills and experiences relevant to the lecture to life lessons. In spite of noticing the benefit that the discussion section brought, he still had the feeling of shyness when sharing his point of view with the whole class, which was

considered a part of his characteristics, as he claimed. Student 12 also emphasized an issue that the dynamic discussion was often run by active students. Nevertheless, undeniably, this is a two-way discussion in which a student have a chance to exchange what they have known throughout their self-exploration and vice versa. Student 18 makes this point clearer.

“I found myself very confident to discuss and share knowledge with everyone because, in this class, I could receive support from my friends and my lecturer regarding things that I do not know. And vice versa, when it comes to group activities, I am willing to share the information I have learned with them.” (Student 18)

As a consequence, the class atmosphere seemed to be more dynamic and communicative as Student 12 confirmed. According to Enfield (2013), one of the characteristics of this model is an interactive and group-based learning environment. Learners are given opportunities to assist each other with hard-to-deal materials and tasks. Once this discussion is successful, the students will be encouraged to join this activity. Besides, it was explained that if the interaction between the lecturer and students is increased, the students will have motivation and encouragement to learn and deliver more communication (Harmer, 2007; Hu & Zhang, 2017; Tsai, 2019). As a result, students are able to take responsibility for their own studying, which aligns with the statements of Benson (2007), Shi and Han (2019). In addition, Tsai (2019) found that the thinking ability of students can be developed through discussion with the questioning and answering process. Hence, they tend to present ideas and language knowledge that they have explored in pre-class tasks rather than passively absorb the information. Consequently, a positive learning atmosphere can be formed as the author claimed. That is the reason why the students in this research actively and willingly shared the knowledge they had explored in the flipped classroom model.

5. Conclusion

Overall, it can be inferred that the model of the flipped classroom positively enhances learner autonomy. In addition, the student’s involvement in class activities is noted as improved. In light of the first statement, learners have the ability and willingness to exercise their autonomy when learning English. Specifically, the knowledge component of the ability element is shown in the learner’s goal-setting and acknowledgment of the value of learning tasks and strategies, whilst the skill component involves what and how the learners do their work. When participating in the flipped class, they also prove their confidence and motivation, representing the willingness element of learner autonomy. The students are willing to join the class-related activities including group work and discussion inside and outside the class. These findings can also be used to address the second research question, which concerns how the flipped classroom approach promotes students’ participation both inside and outside the classroom. The students are considered to actively and confidently engage in activities in both learning environments; therefore they can learn and share knowledge as well as language learning techniques. Additionally, despite possessing autonomous learning, it is determined that the learners own reactive autonomy. Notably, they have some control over their learning process; however, it still depends on their teacher’s support in terms of material and task delivery. Generally, the flipped classroom model can be regarded as an effective and efficient teaching and learning approach to the improvement of learner autonomy and students’ participation in and outside of the classroom, according to the views of the learners.

Both students and educators can find these research findings valuable regarding the impacts of the flipped classroom model on the enhancement of learner autonomy. Therefore, university

students can improve their autonomous learning experience positively and effectively thanks to their preparations for their learning progress. The student's autonomy and involvement can be greatly enhanced while teachers and educators may have a variety of suggestions for helping their learners participate in this novel approach. The following is a summary of three recommendations related to these ideas. To ensure that the students have a general understanding of how the model operates and which tasks they should be involved in, instructors should first offer the learners explicit instructions about how the flipped classes work. Secondly, it is necessary to equip the learners with different learning skills such as time and task management skills, searching skills, and how to use online learning platforms so that they are eligible to be exposed to this new interactive and dynamic learning approach. Finally, training sessions should be also suggested to ensure that all educators can fully acknowledge every aspect of the flipped classroom approach. Therefore, they can assume the role of consultants who show the willingness and readiness to assist their learner's autonomous learning when needed.

Concerning limitations, this study is confronted with issues pertaining to data triangulation and the length of the experiment. First of all, this paper appears to focus mainly on the viewpoint of students, who actively hold ideas for their studying. However, teachers could also be considered to be a source of information about how students are improving their learning autonomy. Students' achievement records, which are inaccessible in this research, are useful data to reflect their endeavors and effective, autonomous study. Therefore, teachers' perspectives and students' end-course test results could be collected in mixed-method research, thus allowing researchers to view students' practice of autonomous learning from a more objective perspective. Moreover, although the result shows that students might have established reactive autonomy, it is inadequate to conclude that they continue this habit in subsequent college years when controlled pre-class exercises are not provided. That some students, through the model of classroom, realized the benefits of pre-class learning, insufficiently suggests their attempt to do that in the future without teachers' facilitation or requirement. Further research could apply the flipped classroom model in a longitudinal study, which gradually replaces the controlled online exercises with space for students to do some searching themselves, based on the syllabus.

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