The Saudi University Students' Experience of Flipping the English Language Classroom

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Flipping the classroom is not a newly applied instructional method in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) educational settings. It entails that what is conventionally completed in the classroom is now done at home and the sequence is reversed. Numerous researchers expanded on the highly positive attitudes the students hold towards this method. However, revisiting this aspect of research is always recommended, especially in unexplored educational settings, as it is the case in this current paper which was conducted in a Saudi context. More interestingly, the results obtained through the use of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview contradicted most of the previous ones. As a matter of fact, the Saudi learners of English informing this research expressed no favourable attitude or enjoyment of the flip model. Such negativity could be either gender-based or attributed to the challenges such method could pose which are related to the learning styles of the Saudis. Further implications are discussed throughout the paper.

Key words: *Flipped Classroom, Challenges, Attitudes, Saudi Learners.*

Introduction

Recent research and empirical evidence from classroom based research asserted that nurturing the students' sense of classroom ownership and increasing their degree of involvement in the learning process itself would considerably increase their interest to construct knowledge and thus learn. The question that may be posed in this respect is what strategy to apply in order to achieve the aforementioned goals. Educators were recommended to incorporate digital technology as an instructional strategy to teach which unquestionably has its own say in education today owing to the integral role it plays to

make teaching and learning more meaningful. Furthermore, advocates of the constructivist approach called for more emphasis to be placed on the learner as the main party to be responsible for his/her own construction of new knowledge if learning is to actually take place. Indeed, the more responsibilities for learning taken by the learners were reflected through the paradigm transition of focus from the teacher to the learner. Boholano (2017) confirmed that today's learners have grown up in a rapid paced digital world that helps them easily tune out of the conventional way of learning that is lecture based.

The flipped classroom, here, was proposed as the technology mediated approach that would nurture learner centeredness and active learning. Although it is not a new teaching method as it has been practiced and adopted under different terminologies such as "inverted classroom" and "reversed classroom", the flipped classroom has regained better acknowledgement with Bergmann and Sams (2012) who made teacher narrated videos with the motive to help their students who missed classes. Since then, this teaching approach has become "one of the most rapidly emerging trends in e-learning" (Kang, 2015, p. 42).

The Rationale of the Study

The recent acknowledgment of Kang (2015) that the "high popularity and expectation of flipped classroom seem plausible, but its applicability has been questioned among some educators" (p. 42) as well as Choi's (2016) statement that "language learning is one of the least explored territories in flipped learning research" (p. 3) are the two main reasons that rationalise the conduct of the present research.

In more particular terms, the University of Jeddah is a newly founded establishment that has been competing to gain an acknowledged position not only among the Saudi universities but also within the Gulf region and the Arab universities in more general terms. Therefore, serious attempts were made to keep up and adopt the recent educational reforms and approaches deemed beneficial and essential in the development of the learning process. The University of Jeddah adopted a project that is based on the flipped classroom model and encouraged the English language instructors to apply it. This urges the need to carry out this research in order to figure out how this approach is implemented in EFL settings and voice the Saudi learners' perceptions towards their experience with this newly adopted approach to learning.

The Study Objectives

As it is the case with any research, this paper will contribute to the existing flipped classroom literature which will be of help to researchers working on this educational approach in EFL contexts namely a still unexplored setting that is the Saudi tertiary level as it aims to explore

the ways how the learning experience is restructured in EFL classrooms at the university of Jeddah in order to fit in the principles of flipped learning. It is basically designed to provide language instructors with a theoretical overview as well as a practical experience that stand as a guide that would inform their future practices and thus help them enhance their teaching. The focus of this paper, however, is not to identify the effect off the implementation of the flipped classroom on the learners' language attainments, that is the ultimate goal behind the application of this model, but to pronounce how the students view this approach to learning.

Literature Review
The Flipped Classroom

As the name implies, flipped classroom consists in "inverting the classroom". Eveseeva & Solozhenko (2015) explained that "the main stages of teaching and learning process such as classroom activities and homework are reversed" (p. 206). This simply means that any activity that was conventionally completed at home is now done in class and vice versa (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, p. 13). Besides, the flipped classroom is conceptualised as an instructional approach that is based on two major components namely: video based lectures that the students receive and go through at home instead of the classroom; and interactive group learning activities cooperatively done by the students and the teacher in class.

It is worthy to note that the implementation of this teaching model also entails the strong presence and use of technology. To put it in the words of Uguten & Balci (2017) "there is much use of technology for the sake of teaching and learning" (p. 254). Eveseeva & Solozhenko (2015) went further to describe "flipped classroom" itself as "technology" and considered it a key element of blended learning which combines online activities and tasks with actual face-to-face learning experiences.

The Flipped Classroom and the English Language Learning

A review of the literature showed an increasing interest and the extensive research conducted to investigate the educational attributes brought about by the flipped classroom model which has become "a popular pedagogy in many institutes around the world, especially in the context of higher education" (Lo & Hew, 2017, p. 1). In fact, across school ages such subject areas as medicine, science and statistics have been focused on. It was only very recently that more emphasis has been placed on the relationship between flipping the classroom and English language learning enhancement. Eveseeva & Solozhenko (2015) for instance, studied the efficiency of flipped classroom technology in the process of English language teaching and learning and investigated its use at a technical university. They came to the conclusion that the participants' motivation enhanced and their academic performances improved.

Being based on the principle of increasing the involvement and engagement of the learner, the flipped classroom evidently stands as an opposing model to the traditional way of teaching which was applied in education for decades but proved to be inadequate to answer the rapidly changing needs of the new generations of learners (Er et al., 2012).

English Language Learning Traditional or Flipped?

Proponents of the flipped classroom grounded their strong favouritism towards it on the fact that it is constructivist in nature and opposes the traditional way of learning. They argued that the latter is basically teacher led where the students are mere passive recipients of information while in flipped classrooms students are active partakers in shaping their learning experiences. In addition, this approach nurtures the principle of student centeredness wherein a "redoubled importance [is] given to the learners in language teaching and learning" (Sanal, 2016, p. 1027).

Most notably when a comparison between traditional learning and the flipped counterpart is established in terms of achievements, the former overtakes the latter. In this very respect, Schultz et al., (2014) applied a quasi-experimental design in order to investigate the effectiveness of both types of learning and found that the students in flipped classrooms significantly outperformed those in traditional ones. More recently, Chao et al., (2015) and Bhagat et al., (2016) came to the same conclusion and reported that better achievements were reached when flipped learning is employed.

Kang (2015) on the other hand, established a comparison between regular and flipped EFL classrooms in Korea with a particular focus on the effective retention of vocabulary and grammar knowledge which was identified through pre and post tests. The findings of his research revealed that the flipped classroom displayed statistically significant changes in both language constructs. In more general terms, the same author suggested that "flipped classroom was worth applying in English language course to enhance achievement and engagement" (p. 64).

The Attributes of Flipped Learning

Referring to the advantages flipping the classroom provides, Eveseeva & Solozhenko (2015) announced that the flipped classroom is "a promising technology which shouldn't be underestimated" (p. 209) because it enhances the students' motivation and interest in learning. Besides, it positively affects their "self-discipline" and "self-directedness" which in turn, lead to better academic performance. Many other researchers studied the effect of using flipped classroom on enhancing the academic performance of the English language learners and came to the conclusion that better language learning attainments were achieved.

Santikarn & Wichadee (2018) for instance, postulated that in a flipped classroom the learning of the English language is promoted as the students made a noticeable progress reflected through their high scores on the English exams. The same authors attributed these high achievements to the fact that in a flipped classroom, the learners are more familiar with the subject material before coming into class.

Another advantage when applying flipped learning is autonomy. As a matter of fact, making autonomous students who are responsible for their own learning has always been considered a goal in itself based on the conviction that being autonomous would help learners hold the power to regulate and control their own learning activities which would yield in better academic performances and achievements. Santikarn & Wichadee (2018) examined autonomy in flipped classrooms and found that "flipped classroom is suitable for many types of courses because it allows students to learn English effectively and autonomously. Particularly for language learning which makes use of authentic materials or online sources in teaching, flipped lessons can be used to facilitate students' learning in a more systematic way to acquire the target language" (p. 125).

Motivation is still another advantage of flipped classrooms. In effect, many authors foregrounded the flipped classroom as the instructional tool that would help the students overcome a lack of interest in learning and raise their motivation and thus realise higher language proficiency levels. Schullery et al., (2011) and Hsieh et al., (2015) for instance, acknowledged that the driving motive for flipping the classroom is to foster the students' engagement and motivation given that this model i.e. the flipped classroom, is basically technology mediated which proved, according to the same authors, its motivational effect on the students.

However and despite all the above mentioned attributes, implementing flipped learning is not flawless. It poses a few challenges discussed in the section below.

Flipped Learning Challenges

One of the difficulties that most of the learners suffer from has to do with the study load which was described by Choi (2016) as "burdensome" to add to this the lecture videos which are long and sometimes of mediocre quality and are not perfectly designed. In addition, Kang (2015) raised a number of interrelated issues which may hamper the successful implementation of the flipped learning model. The students' preparedness at home is one of them. In fact, these students are assumed to go through before-class assignments such as watching lecture videos. However, not all of them will engage and perform the tasks. Lo & Hew (2017) on the other hand, indicated that the in-class activities cannot be performed well when the students come to the class unprepared. This "not doing assignment", according to

Correa (2015), does not only demotivate the learners who could not go through the tasks but also disturb the other group members who were committed and did their job. This in turn, leads to another problematic issue which is related to the discrepant proficiency level between the students. As reported by Abaeian & Samadi (2016), foreign language proficiency is one of the factors that influence the use of flipped learning. In more particular terms, the authors found out that flipped learning does not have the same effect on the reading comprehension of the students with intermediate and upper-intermediate levels.

Despite the tremendous advancement in technology use, (the number of internet users reached 4.1 billion in December, 2018 according to Hosting facts), as it has become easier for people to enjoy surfing the internet wherever they are, disparity in technology access still exists today and is pointed out as a challenging factor in flipped classroom literature. Indeed, this approach was reproached for being a totally technology dependent.

The students' dependence on their teachers as guides and facilitators as well as their comfort with the traditional method of learning is still a problematic issue. Lo & Hew (2017) claimed that instructing the learners to read a certain text or watch a recorded video on their own where the teachers' explanation and elaboration on given lexical items is missing seems to be a little problematic for them. The same issue was raised by Grimsley (2013) who argued that learners' misunderstanding or need for explanation are addressed immediately in traditional classes while the absence of the instructors, here, could be confusing for the learners. This could be considered another drawback of the flipped classroom method.

The fact that the flipped classroom method strongly defends autonomous learning and is based on the learner centeredness principle makes the identification of the learners themselves perceptions towards this model highly relevant.

Students' Perceptions of the Flipped Classroom Experience

Shih & Tsai (2017) findings, from a study they conducted at a Taiwanese technical university to identify the students views of flipping the classroom and its effect on facilitating online project based learning (PBL), indicated a strongly favourable attitude from the part of the participants who believed that the flip approach improves their learning effectiveness, enhances their motivation and interest to learn and develops their collaborative skills.

As far as EFL is concerned, Fauzan & Ngabut (2018) carried out research with the aim to find out about the EFL students' perceptions on implementing the flipped model in a writing class. The students signified positive views of this model and explained that it helped them learn at their own pace and be more responsible for their learning as they can adjust the time to study according to their own availability and without any distraction. They added that the

flipped classroom is one way to avoid the traditional boring and monotonous classroom. The same results were found by Santikarn & Wichadee (2018) whose subjects were Thai university students informing about the effect of flipping the classroom on their performance as well as their perceptions towards this model. The participants demonstrated a strong favouritism towards the flipped classroom as they asserted that it helped them gain more autonomy which in turn, yields in better language attainments.

In more particular terms, Alsowat (2016) explored the Saudi context by examining the effects of the flipped classroom teaching model on the EFL learners at the Faculty of Education at Taif University by comparing between two groups (experimental and control). All the results revealed were in favour of the former group. In fact, the author claimed that flipped instruction provided the participants with more opportunities to be more autonomous and responsible for their learning through the use of a variety of "untraditional" activities and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) devices and tools which helped promote their degree of interest and engagement in the course. As for their perceptions, the learners developed a highly positive attitude towards the flip model as they expressed their great satisfaction with this approach to learning. In the same vein, Abdelshaheed (2017) investigated the effect of applying the flipped classroom model on the achievement of 62 university students in an EFL course. She also attempted to identify these subjects' levels of satisfaction and comfort with the model. The study findings affirmed the hypothesis that "the flipped classroom leads to meaningful learning" (p. 108). The participants displayed favourable views about this instructional approach and argued that it created an interactive atmosphere in the class because the lectures are out the class-time thus more spaces were provided for discussions and feedback which, according to the informants, improved their language learning. Within similar lines of thought, Alnuhayt (2018) investigated the attitudes of EFL Saudi learners of English at Shaqra University and came up with the result that these students hold positive attitudes concerning the application of the flip classroom method when learning vocabulary. The subjects demonstrated a high degree of agreement on the learning enjoyability they feel when employing this instructional method.

With all the aforementioned positive views in mind, this study, whose setting is different, is mainly conducted to answer the following questions:

1- What are the different features of the flipped classroom experience at the University of Jeddah?
2- What evidence shows that flipped learning works or does not work according to the Saudi learners at the University of Jeddah?
3- What challenges could the flipped learning experience pose as perceived by the Saudi learners at the University of Jeddah?

Method
Subject

64 out of a total number of 345 male students voluntarily enrolled in the flipped learning classroom project to study the foundation course of English, (also known as English Language Institute: ELI program), at the University of Jeddah at the beginning of the academic year 2019-2020. They are all in their preparatory year and their age ranges from 18 to 22 years with a mean of 19. It is worthy to mention that all the participants had no prior experience with flipped learning and are simultaneously studying their other subjects in the conventional way.

Instruments

Data was gathered by using two strands of instruments: a student questionnaire (Appendix A) and a semi-structured interview (Appendix B).

The student's questionnaire comprises three parts each of which includes 5 items. The first part aims to investigate the Saudi learners' perceptions towards the actual implementation of the flipped classroom model in the learning of English as a foreign language. The second part, on the other hand, explores the informants' affective perceptions of the implementation of the flipped classroom model. While the third part elicits their views about the challenges this instructional method posed. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The average response value for each item on the questionnaire was calculated by dividing the response values of each student by item (1 = strongly disagree / 2= disagree / 3= neutral / 4= agree / 5= strongly agree) and dividing them then by the total number of informants that was 64. It is to note, here, that the same approach was independently applied on each of the three parts of the questionnaire.

In order to confer more reliability on this research a second instrument was used namely a semi-structured interview which comprises 8 questions. In fact, this instrument was meant to provide further and deeper understanding of how the Saudi learners at the University of Jeddah perceived their experience with the flipped classroom. For the sake of convenience, the interviews were conducted with only 30 students who were randomly selected from the whole sample of the study. The students' replies were subjected to content analysis according to thematic categorisation. The researcher coded and grouped these responses in order to identify common themes.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: A brief description of the features of the current research

Academic year	Period	Number of participants	Setting
2019-2020	4 months (term 1)	64	University of Jeddah
Before-class activities	**In-class activities**	**Targeted language skills**	**Research type**
- Using websites to learn pronunciation - Read documents online - Write assigned composition online	- Collaborative learning - Discussions - Pair/group work - Presentations - Summative evaluation	All language constructs Reading/listening/ speaking/writing/v ocabulary and grammar.	Qualitative

Table 1 aims to provide an overview of the different features of this research including: the period of conduct; the number of participants; the type of research; as well as the different pre and in-class activities the Saudi EFL learners were instructed to go through in order to conform to the different stages of the flipped classroom method.

Table 2: The Saudi learners' perception towards the actual implementation of the flipped classroom model

Item	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. In the flipped classroom, learning is better with less role played by the teacher	57	89	6	10	0	0	0	0	1	1
2. When flipping the classroom, more time is devoted to discussions with the teacher rather than mere lecturing from them.	60	94	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. The use of flipped learning is more advantageous than the conventional way of learning.	58	90	6	11	2	3	0	0	0	0
4. The implementation of flipped learning improves my English language proficiency.	60	94	3	5	0	0	1	1	0	0
5. The flipped classroom model suits my learning style.	62	97	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2 shows the results concerning the EFL Saudi learners' perceptions towards the actual implementation of the flipped classroom model. The replies to the different items reflected no variation as the average response value equalled 4 or higher which reflects the informants' strong resistance to this model that was translated through the high percentage of those who strongly disagree on the different items on the table. Statistically speaking, 90% of the informants disagree about the fact that this model could be much more advantageous than the conventional way of learning that is basically lecturing. 89 % of these informants do not perceive that learning is much better with less intervention on the part of the teacher while 97% do not see that the flipped classroom suits their learning styles. Furthermore, most of the interviewees' responses were thematically consistent, thus reflecting the subjects' dissatisfaction with the flipped classroom model. "I used to ask my teacher each now and then, he is not with me at home", one of the informants stated. Another conveyed, "I usually escape the homework and my grades are excellent, but now I don't know".

Even though the obtained results do not align with most research that shows the positive attitudes the learners hold towards the flipped classroom, the Saudis strong opposition to this model could be attributed to their comfort with the teacher centred approach where less effort is required from them. This is particularly true for the Saudi learners as articulated by Alshahrani (2016) who acknowledged the still teacher centred culture the learners are accustomed to which prevents any kind of individualism or independence in learning from the part of the students (Cited in Alrabai, 2018).

Table 3: The Saudi learners' affective perceptions of the implementation of the flipped classroom

Item	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The flipped classroom model increases my motivation and interest to learn the language.	61	95	2	4	0	0	1	1	0	0
2. I feel more comfortable with the flipped learning model.	58	90	5	8	0	0	1	1	0	0
3. With the flipped classroom method, the learning of the English language becomes more enjoyable.	50	78	10	7	2	3	1	1	1	1
4. Flipping the classroom is a nice experience for learning.	60	96	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5. With the flipped classroom, I become ready to go through more autonomy related activities.	57	89	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	3

Table 3 displays the Saudi learners' feelings towards the experience of using the flipped classroom method in learning the English language. Results revealed that most of the students (95%) informing this research were not happy or satisfied with the flipped classroom as an instructional method. This discomfort is reflected through the high disagreement of almost all the informants on the different items displayed on the table. For instance, 95% of the respondents strongly disagree that flipped learning increases their motivation to learn the English language. In fact, most of the learners were not comfortable with this approach to learning which negatively affected their interest. The same attitudes were articulated by the interviewed informants who showed no particular interest in this model of learning. One of the students asserted that "I don't feel at home anymore, I feel I am always in a classroom", another argued "what is the point behind the inversion? I don't know". These results are inconsistent with those of Alnuhayt (2018), Abdelshaheed (2017) and Alsowat (2016) whose findings demonstrated the EFL Saudi students' positive perceptions of this model.

Table 4: The Saudi learners' perceptions towards the difficulties encountered when flipping the classroom

Item	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. With the absence of the teacher for immediate explanation, I feel lost and confused.	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	61	95
2. I feel the study load is burdensome.	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	60	93
3. I don't feel it is compulsory to go through the before-class materials.	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	5	60	93
4. The internet is slow and sometimes does not work at all	60	94	3	5	0	0	1	1	0	0
5. The online materials are huge and excessive.	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	22	50	78

Table 4 indicates the students' answers to the third part of the questionnaire that is related to the difficulties they may encounter. In fact, the average response for four of the items on the table is almost 2 or less which mirrors the high percentage of respondents who strongly agreed on the statements where they feel confused and lost (95%) as the study load they are required to complete is burdensome (93%). Furthermore, most of them (95%) do not perceive it compulsory to get prepared before the class-time. These results lend support to the findings of Gundlach et al., (2015) who attributed the students' dissatisfaction with this learning approach to the considerable amount of work they were assigned to do and the duties they are required to accomplish outside classrooms. The same ideas were conveyed through the interviewees' answers. As a matter of fact, 24 of the students reported that their dissatisfaction with this model is attributed to the huge load of work they were supposed to

go through and the feeling of lack of guidance on the part of the teacher they are familiar with. "I don't know why I should do all this work at home; I feel there is no need to go to the school anymore" one of the comments as articulated by an interviewee. Another added "I simply do not do the work at home; it should be done in class".

Contradictorily to the agreement measures on the first three items, the fourth item "the internet is slow and sometimes does not work at all" had the highest disagreement average which indicates that participants did not face any network unavailability or access problems which may be explained by the serious efforts made by the Saudi government to make the internet reachable and easily accessed. It is also confirmed by Al-Gahtani et al., (2007) that the Saudis are accustomed to the use of the internet and that the risk of its interruption is minimal. Therefore, the current research lends no support to that of Gross (2014) who found that some participants might not have access to the internet, which wasn't considered an issue in study. The real challenge however, is shown through the informants' answers to the fifth item. In fact, the informants strongly agree that the online materials are huge and excessive. This is consistent with the results found by Shih & Tsai (2017) who reported that the challenge the Taiwanese students suffered from had to do with the excessive load and bulk of the on online platforms materials which made them disinclined to go through the preparation stage.

Recommendations and Implications for Future Research

The Saudi participants in this research were complaining about the large amount of study load they were required to go through at home to which they reacted negatively by not doing the assignments altogether. Most of them neglect this integral part for the effective and successful implementation of the flipped classroom model. Instructors are recommended, in this respect, to sensitise their students and raise their awareness on the importance of the before-class activities. Perks and bonuses accorded to those who went through the home assignments would be highly encouraging and may, in a way, guarantee an understanding of flipping the classroom advantages.

Teachers are recommended to reduce the duration of videos they record thus taking into consideration the fact that the human attention span is short. Guo et al., (2014) found that videos with shorter segments are more engaging and thus draw the teachers' attention to consider this when devising the different parts of the course content. Continuous professional development training is highly needed to equip the teachers with the skills and knowledge required to effectively implement the flipping classroom model. Therefore, further examination is recommended to focus on the teacher as an integral partner in the learning process.

More interestingly, numerous researchers mentioned the not-access to the internet as a challenge that may hamper the effective implementation of the pre-stage (preparation) of the flipped classroom. This study results however, indicated that participants did not face any network unavailability or access problems. This may be attributed to the strong establishment of the networks in KSA. It is recommended in this respect, not to overgeneralise the difficulties encountered by a particular sample. Instead, it is recommended to carry out research that particularly focusses on the different kinds of challenges a particular group of learners may suffer from and come up with remedial suggestions in order to effectively implement any instructional approach.

As for the implications for future research, three were construed when carrying out this research. The first has to do with the preparation stage namely the part of the learning the students are required to do independently at home. This has another reference in educational research namely the study skills. As a matter of fact, one of the pillars the flipped classroom, as suggested by Üguten & Balci (2017), is the learning culture wherein a particular emphasis has been placed on the active contribution of learners to their language learning process thus involving their learning culture which in turn, entails their use of their own learning styles and study skills. With this in mind, new paths for researchers could be opened up in order to investigate the particular study skills that learners may adopt in order to ensure the effective implementation of the flip model. Identifying the particular study skills that the EFL learners should develop for an effective flipped classroom would lead to better language attainments.

The second implication is gender based. In fact, a short review of the flipped learning literature in Saudi Arabia led to the conclusion that all the participants in the different research conducted in a Saudi setting to identify perceptions towards the flip model were female students. It is only in this study that the subjects are male students. This may lead to hypothesise that female learners are more likely to enthusiastically embrace the flip classroom learning approach and demonstrate a greater motivation towards it over their male counterparts. Further studies analysing and comparing male and female students' views on this teaching method would confirm or reject this assumption.

The third implication on the other hand, is related to the students' proficiency level. As has been mentioned before, the Saudi students voluntarily participated in the flipped classroom project where their proficiency level variable was not accounted for. This makes it difficult to decide the existence of any association between the Saudi students' level and their unfavourable attitude towards flipping the classroom experience. This paves the way to proceed with the hypothesis that highly performing students are highly motivated to use flipped learning whereas the less-abled ones are not. Accordingly, more research is needed to affirm this assumption.

Despite the relevant implications this study provides, it still suffers a few drawbacks and limitations.

Limitations

The findings of this research were based solely on the learners' attitudes towards the flipped classroom model. Even though, these learners are at the centre of the learning process, teachers are still influential partakers and their roles still integrally count in the success of any educational approach. Should it include the teachers' perceptions towards their experience with flipping the classroom, this study could have yielded more reliable, authentic and accountable results that would enrich the flipped classroom literature. In addition, all the informants in this work were male students. The female attitudes were not included. Although this was done for religious and cultural considerations in the Saudi setting, a simultaneous research could have been conducted to explore the Saudi female students' perceptions of flipping the classroom in order to come up with more inclusive and generalisable results.

Conclusion

As articulated by Uguten & Balci (2017) teaching and learning a foreign language has recently become a debatable issue worldwide. For the sake of gaining better language attainments, scholars placed a substantial emphasis on the learner and recommended the urgent need to shift from teacher to leaner centred approaches. One of the instructional methods that ensure this shift is the flipped classroom which received favourable feedback in various educational settings. In fact, most participants in most of the studies reviewed demonstrated high positive perceptions on the flipped teaching model. However, the Saudis reporting to this research showed a radically different attitude and approached the flip classroom negatively. Even though it contradicts what is assumed previously of the pedagogical advantages of implementing the flip classroom model, this study raises interesting questions on the application of a certain instructional approach. Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended to carry out students' needs analysis before the adoption of any approach in order to ensure the students' academic developments; an ultimate goal that the teaching community as a whole including teachers, pedagogists and curriculum designers aim to reach.

Appendix A
A Student Questionnaire

Instructions: Kindly read each statement carefully and then tick the number that best indicates how you feel (1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neutral   4= agree 5= strongly agree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Part 1: Your perception towards the actual implementation of the flipped classroom model					
1. In the flipped classroom, learning is better with less role played by the teacher					
2. When flipping the classroom, more time is devoted to discussions with the teacher rather than mere lecturing from them.					
3. The use of flipped learning is more advantageous than the conventional way of learning.					
4. The implementation of flipped learning improves my English language proficiency.					
5. The flipped classroom model suits my learning style.					
Part 2: Your affective perceptions of the implementation of the flipped classroom					
6. The flipped classroom model increases my motivation and interest to learn the language.					
7. I feel more comfortable with the flipped learning model.					
8. With the flipped classroom method, the learning of the English language becomes more enjoyable.					
9. Flipping the classroom is a nice experience for learning.					
10. With the flipped classroom, I become ready to go through more autonomy-related activities.					
Part 3: Your perceptions towards the difficulties encountered when flipping the classroom.					
11. With the absence of the teacher for immediate explanation, I feel lost and confused.					
12. I feel the study load is burdensome.					
13. I don't feel it is compulsory to go through the before- class materials.					
14. The internet is slow and sometimes does not work at all					
15. The online materials are huge and excessive.					

Appendix B

A semi- structured interview

1. What definition can you provide for the flipped classroom model?
2. What differences can you identify between the conventional and flipped classroom?
3. Which way of learning do you prefer; the conventional or the flipped? Why?
4. How did you feel when the flipped classroom model was implemented?
5. To what extent is the flipped classroom model an appropriate way of learning?
6. Why can you recommend the flipped classroom model as a teaching tool?
7. What kind of difficulties and problems did you face when the flipped classroom model was implemented?
8. Overall, how can you describe your experience with the flipped classroom?

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