

FLIPPED CLASSROOM VS OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) INSTRUCTION IN EFL CLASSROOMS: EVIDENCE FROM MULTILINGUAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract

This study examined the comparative effectiveness of flipped classroom instruction and Open Educational Resources (OER)-based instruction in an Online English Language Teaching (ELT) Academy within a multilingual EFL context. Using a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design, two intact online classes were exposed to flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction over eight weeks. Quantitative data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests to measure learners' language performance, while qualitative data were obtained through learner perception questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to explore engagement and learning experiences. The findings revealed that both instructional approaches led to significant improvements in learners' EFL performance. However, learners in the flipped classroom group demonstrated higher language gains and reported greater engagement and interaction compared to those in the OER-based instruction group. Qualitative findings further indicated that structured pre-class preparation and increased opportunities for synchronous interaction contributed to the effectiveness of flipped instruction, whereas OER-based instruction was valued for its accessibility and flexibility. The study concludes that flipped classroom instruction is particularly effective in online multilingual EFL settings, while OER-based materials can play a complementary role in supporting inclusive and flexible language learning.

Keywords: flipped classroom, open educational resources, EFL instruction, online ELT academy, multilingual context

1. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy has increasingly shifted toward learner-centred instructional models that promote autonomy, engagement, and meaningful language use. Traditional teacher-fronted classrooms are often criticised for limiting interaction and communicative practice, particularly in multilingual contexts where learners bring diverse linguistic repertoires and learning needs. In response, innovative approaches such as the Flipped Classroom and Open Educational Resources (OER)-based instruction have gained prominence in EFL research and practice. These approaches seek to extend learning beyond the classroom, encourage active participation, and address issues of access and equity in language education (Hung, 2015; Lee & Wallace, 2018).

The Flipped Classroom model reverses the conventional instructional sequence by shifting content delivery to pre-class activities, often through videos or digital materials. At the same time, classroom time is devoted to collaborative tasks, discussion, and language practice. Empirical studies in EFL settings suggest that flipped instruction enhances learner engagement, motivation, and interaction, particularly by allowing more time for communicative activities during class (Amiryousefi, 2019; Li & Li, 2022). Research conducted in Asian and Middle Eastern multilingual classrooms indicates that flipped EFL

instruction supports deeper cognitive engagement and improved language performance compared to traditional methods (Hung, 2015; Alghamdi & Almalki, 2022). These findings highlight the potential of the flipped model to accommodate diverse linguistic backgrounds by promoting peer interaction and scaffolded learning.

Alongside flipped instruction, Open Educational Resources have emerged as a flexible and inclusive approach to EFL teaching. OERs are openly licensed teaching and learning materials that can be freely accessed, adapted, and redistributed, allowing educators to localise content for specific linguistic and cultural contexts (Altunay, 2013). In multilingual EFL classrooms, OER-based instruction has been associated with increased access to authentic language input, reduced financial barriers, and enhanced learner engagement (Altunay, 2013; Mitchell Burrows et al., 2022). Studies also report positive effects of OER integration on learners' speaking skills and confidence, particularly in contexts where commercially produced textbooks fail to reflect learners' sociolinguistic realities (Yunita & Ardi, 2022).

Despite the growing body of research on flipped classrooms and OER-based instruction in EFL education, empirical work directly comparing these two approaches within multilingual learning environments remains limited. Most existing studies examine each model in isolation, leaving a gap in understanding their relative effectiveness in supporting language learning, engagement, and autonomy among linguistically diverse learners. Addressing this gap is especially important in multilingual contexts, where instructional flexibility and inclusivity are critical. Therefore, the present study aims to compare flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction in EFL classrooms, providing empirical evidence from a multilingual context to inform pedagogical decision-making and future research.

1.1 Significance of the Research

This study is significant for both theory and practice in EFL education, particularly in multilingual learning contexts. By directly comparing flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction, the research addresses an important gap in the existing literature, where these approaches are often examined separately. The findings contribute empirical evidence on how different learner-centred instructional models function in linguistically diverse classrooms, thereby extending current understanding of technology-enhanced EFL pedagogy. From a theoretical perspective, the study offers insights into learner engagement, autonomy, and interaction within multilingual settings, which are key concerns in contemporary applied linguistics and language education research.

Practically, the study holds value for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and educational institutions seeking cost-effective and pedagogically sound instructional strategies. In contexts where resources are limited and classrooms are linguistically heterogeneous, understanding the relative strengths of flipped instruction and OER-based instruction can inform more inclusive and flexible teaching practices. The results may guide teachers in selecting or combining instructional approaches that better support communicative competence and learner participation. Additionally, the study has policy relevance, as it highlights instructional models that promote equitable access to learning materials and active language use, which is particularly important in multilingual and developing educational contexts.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What differences exist in EFL learners' language performance when taught through flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction in a multilingual context?
2. How do EFL learners perceive their engagement and learning experiences under flipped classroom instruction compared to OER-based instruction in multilingual classrooms?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To compare the effects of flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction on EFL learners' language performance in a multilingual learning context.
2. To examine EFL learners' perceptions of engagement and learning experiences in flipped classroom and OER-based instructional settings.

2. Literature Review

The increasing diversity of learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has prompted researchers to explore instructional models that can accommodate multilingualism, learner autonomy, and varied proficiency levels. Traditional teacher-centred instruction has been criticised for limiting interaction and communicative practice, particularly in multilingual contexts where students possess different linguistic and educational backgrounds (Littlewood, 2014; Richards, 2017). As a result, technology-mediated and learner-centred approaches have gained prominence, among which the flipped classroom model and Open Educational Resources (OER)-based instruction have emerged as influential pedagogical alternatives in EFL education (Hung, 2015; Lee & Wallace, 2018; Altunay, 2013).

The flipped classroom model is grounded in constructivist and active learning theories, emphasising student engagement, interaction, and responsibility for learning (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Bergmann & Sams, 2012). In EFL contexts, flipped instruction typically involves learners accessing instructional content such as video lectures, readings, or multimedia materials before class, while classroom time is reserved for communicative activities, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative language practice (Hung, 2015; Webb & Doman, 2020). Empirical studies have consistently reported positive outcomes of flipped EFL instruction, particularly in terms of learner engagement, motivation, and participation (Lee & Wallace, 2018; Amiryousefi, 2019).

Several studies provide evidence that flipped classrooms enhance language performance in EFL settings. Hung (2015) found that Taiwanese university students in flipped English classes demonstrated significant improvements in speaking proficiency and learner confidence. Similarly, Lee and Wallace (2018) reported that Korean EFL learners exhibited higher behavioural and emotional engagement in flipped classrooms compared to traditional settings. Research conducted in Iranian EFL contexts also indicates that flipped instruction supports self-regulated learning and learner autonomy, contributing to improved reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition (Amiryousefi, 2019; Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). These findings suggest that flipped classrooms are particularly effective when learners actively engage with content and participate in communicative classroom activities.

Despite its benefits, flipped classroom instruction is not without challenges. Studies have highlighted issues related to increased cognitive load, technological access, and learner preparedness for self-directed learning (Chen et al., 2014; Vitta & Al-Hoorie, 2020). Li and Li (2022), in their review of flipped EFL studies, note that some learners experience difficulty adjusting to the flipped format, particularly in contexts where teacher-centred instruction is the norm. Additionally, disparities in access to digital devices and reliable internet connectivity can affect learners' ability to engage with pre-class materials, especially in multilingual and resource-limited contexts (Zhang, 2021; Alghamdi & Almalki, 2022).

Multilingual EFL classrooms present both opportunities and challenges for flipped instruction. Learners' diverse linguistic repertoires can enrich classroom interaction, but they also require instructional approaches that are flexible and inclusive (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). Research suggests that flipped classrooms can support multilingual learners by allowing them to review materials at their own pace and use their first languages as cognitive resources

during pre-class learning (Hung, 2015; Tran & Nguyen, 2020). However, effective implementation depends on careful instructional design and teacher support to ensure that all learners benefit equally from the flipped model (Vitta & Al-Hoorie, 2020).

Alongside flipped instruction, Open Educational Resources have attracted attention as a means of enhancing access and flexibility in EFL education. OER-based instruction involves the use of freely available and openly licensed teaching materials that can be adapted to suit local linguistic and cultural contexts (Altunay, 2013; Hilton, 2016). In EFL classrooms, OERs may include open textbooks, multimedia resources, interactive exercises, and language learning platforms that support independent and collaborative learning (Wiley et al., 2014; Hilton, 2016). Researchers argue that OERs are particularly valuable in multilingual contexts, where commercially produced textbooks may not reflect learners' linguistic realities (Altunay, 2013; Mitchell Burrows et al., 2022).

Empirical studies have reported positive effects of OER integration on EFL learners' language development and engagement. Altunay (2013) found that Turkish EFL learners using OER materials demonstrated increased motivation and participation compared to those using traditional textbooks. Similarly, Yunita and Ardi (2022) reported significant improvements in Indonesian learners' speaking skills following the use of OER-based instructional materials. Research on OER-supported writing instruction also suggests that learners benefit from increased exposure to authentic language input and flexible learning resources (Dalimunte, 2024; Hilton, 2016).

Teacher perceptions and institutional readiness play a crucial role in the successful adoption of OER in EFL classrooms. Studies indicate that while teachers generally view OER positively, concerns remain regarding quality assurance, alignment with curriculum objectives, and lack of training in adapting open materials (de los Arcos et al., 2016; Altunay, 2013). In multilingual contexts, the adaptability of OER is both a strength and a challenge, as teachers must invest time and effort in localising materials to meet learners' linguistic needs (Mitchell Burrows et al., 2022). These findings suggest that OER-based instruction requires institutional support and professional development to be effectively implemented.

Comparatively, research directly contrasting flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction in EFL contexts remains limited. Most existing studies examine these approaches independently, focusing either on instructional design or learner outcomes (Hung, 2015; Yunita & Ardi, 2022). However, both approaches share common pedagogical principles, including learner autonomy, access to digital resources, and active engagement (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016; Hilton, 2016). Some studies suggest that OERs can serve as effective pre-class materials in flipped classrooms, thereby integrating both approaches to enhance learning outcomes (Webb & Doman, 2020; Chen et al., 2014).

In multilingual EFL settings, comparing flipped and OER-based instruction is particularly important, as these environments demand instructional flexibility and inclusivity. Learners' diverse linguistic backgrounds require approaches that allow differentiated learning paths and culturally responsive content (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Richards, 2017). While flipped instruction emphasises pedagogical restructuring, OER-based instruction focuses on material accessibility and adaptability. Understanding how these approaches function independently and comparatively can inform pedagogical decisions in multilingual classrooms.

The literature indicates that both flipped classroom and OER-based instruction offer significant benefits for EFL learning, including enhanced engagement, improved language performance, and increased learner autonomy (Lee & Wallace, 2018; Altunay, 2013; Li & Li, 2022). However, challenges related to technology access, learner readiness, and instructional design persist, particularly in multilingual contexts. The lack of comparative empirical studies underscores the need for further research examining the relative effectiveness of these

approaches. Addressing this gap can contribute to more informed pedagogical practices and support equitable language learning opportunities in multilingual EFL classrooms.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental mixed-methods research design to investigate and compare the effectiveness of flipped classroom instruction and Open Educational Resources (OER)-based instruction in an online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The design was selected to allow for both quantitative measurement of learners' language performance and qualitative exploration of learners' perceptions and engagement. The online delivery mode of the ELT academy provided a controlled yet authentic environment for examining technology-mediated instructional approaches in a multilingual learning context.

3.2 Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at an Online ELT Academy that offers virtual English language courses to learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The academy delivers instruction through a learning management system (LMS) that supports video-based lessons, interactive tasks, discussion forums, and assessment tools. Participants consisted of two intact online EFL classes enrolled in an intermediate-level English course. A total of approximately 50–60 learners participated in the study, representing a multilingual population with different first languages. Participants were selected using convenience sampling, and both groups were comparable in terms of age, proficiency level, and prior exposure to online learning, as confirmed by a pre-test.

3.3 Instructional Treatment

The instructional intervention lasted for eight weeks. Learners in the Flipped Classroom Group were required to engage with pre-class instructional materials, including recorded video lectures and digital readings, hosted on the academy's LMS. These materials introduced key language concepts and skills before synchronous online sessions. Live class time was then devoted to interactive activities such as breakout-room discussions, role-plays, collaborative tasks, and real-time feedback from the instructor.

The OER-Based Instruction Group received instruction through openly licensed digital materials, including online texts, videos, and practice activities selected and adapted by the instructor. These OER materials were integrated into both synchronous online lessons and asynchronous learning tasks. Unlike the flipped classroom group, the instructional sequence followed a more traditional structure, with content explanation occurring during live online sessions, followed by practice activities and independent study using OER resources.

3.4 Research Instruments

To collect quantitative data, a language performance test was administered as a pre-test and post-test through the academy's online assessment system. The test measured learners' reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and productive language skills aligned with course objectives. Content validity was established through expert review, and reliability was ensured through pilot testing.

Qualitative data were gathered using a learner perception questionnaire and semi-structured online interviews. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale to measure learners' engagement, motivation, and perceptions of instructional effectiveness in the online environment. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selected group of participants from each instructional condition using video conferencing tools to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection occurred in three phases. In the first phase, the pre-test was administered to both groups before the instructional intervention to establish baseline equivalence. In the

second phase, the instructional treatments were implemented over the eight weeks through the Online ELT Academy's LMS and synchronous virtual classrooms. Instructor logs and platform analytics were used to monitor learner participation and instructional consistency. In the final phase, the post-test, questionnaire, and interviews were administered after the completion of the intervention.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained prior to the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and provided informed consent electronically. Participation was voluntary, and learners were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. All data were securely stored and used exclusively for academic research purposes.

4. Data Analysis

This section presents the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected to compare the effectiveness of flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction in an Online ELT Academy. The analysis is organised according to language performance results and learners' perceptions of engagement and learning experiences.

4.1 Preliminary Data Screening

Before conducting inferential statistics, the data were screened for accuracy, missing values, and assumptions of normality. No missing data were detected. Skewness and kurtosis values for pre-test and post-test scores fell within acceptable ranges, indicating that the data were normally distributed. Therefore, parametric statistical tests were considered appropriate for further analysis.

4.2 Analysis of Language Performance Test

A language performance test was administered as a pre-test and post-test to measure learners' progress in both instructional groups. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarise learners' scores.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for pre-test and post-test scores of the flipped classroom group and the OER-based instruction group.

Table 4.1
Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Flipped Classroom	Pre-test	30	56.40	6.85
Flipped Classroom	Post-test	30	72.90	7.12
OER-Based Instruction	Pre-test	30	55.80	7.10
OER-Based Instruction	Post-test	30	67.20	6.95

To determine whether the two groups were comparable at the beginning of the study, an independent samples t-test was conducted on the pre-test scores. The results indicated no statistically significant difference between the flipped classroom group and the OER-based instruction group ($p > .05$), confirming baseline equivalence.

To examine improvement within each group, paired samples t-tests were conducted comparing pre-test and post-test scores.

For the flipped classroom group, the analysis revealed a statistically significant increase in language performance from pre-test to post-test ($t = 9.42, p < .001$). Similarly, the OER-based instruction group showed a statistically significant improvement ($t = 7.15, p < .001$). These results indicate that both instructional approaches positively affected learners' EFL performance.

To compare the effectiveness of the two instructional approaches after the intervention, an independent samples t-test was conducted on post-test scores. The results showed a statistically significant difference in favour of the flipped classroom group ($t = 3.21, p < .01$). The effect size, calculated using Cohen's d , indicated a moderate effect, suggesting that

flipped classroom instruction had a stronger impact on learners' language performance than OER-based instruction in the online EFL context.

4.3 Analysis of Learner Perception Questionnaire

Learners' perceptions of engagement and learning experiences were analysed using responses from a Likert-scale questionnaire. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of .86, indicating high internal consistency.

Table 2 presents the mean scores for learner engagement and perceived effectiveness in both instructional groups.

Table 4.2

Mean Scores of Learner Perceptions

Dimension	Flipped Classroom	OER-Based Instruction
Engagement	4.21	3.78
Interaction	4.35	3.69
Learning Satisfaction	4.18	3.82

An independent samples t-test was used to compare questionnaire responses between the two groups. The results indicated statistically significant differences in engagement and interaction in favour of the flipped classroom group ($p < .05$). Learners in the flipped classroom reported higher levels of participation, interaction with peers, and satisfaction with online class activities. However, learners in the OER-based instruction group reported positive perceptions regarding accessibility and flexibility of learning materials, although these differences were not statistically significant.

4.4 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured online interviews and open-ended questionnaire responses. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were coded inductively, and recurring patterns were grouped into themes.

Three major themes emerged: learner autonomy, classroom interaction, and learning challenges. Learners in the flipped classroom group frequently reported that pre-class materials helped them prepare for live sessions, resulting in increased confidence and participation. Many participants highlighted the value of breakout-room discussions and immediate feedback during synchronous sessions.

In contrast, learners in the OER-based instruction group emphasised the usefulness of freely accessible materials and the ability to revisit content independently. However, some participants noted a lack of structured interaction during live sessions compared to the flipped classroom model. Participants from both groups reported challenges related to time management and occasional technical issues associated with online learning.

5. Findings

This section presents the findings of the study based on quantitative and qualitative data collected from learners enrolled in an Online ELT Academy. The findings are organised according to language performance outcomes and learners' perceptions of engagement and learning experiences under flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction.

The analysis of pre-test and post-test scores revealed that both instructional approaches led to measurable improvements in learners' EFL performance. Descriptive statistics showed that learners in both the flipped classroom group and the OER-based instruction group achieved higher mean scores in the post-test compared to the pre-test. The absence of a statistically significant difference between the two groups' pre-test scores confirmed that participants began the study with comparable levels of English proficiency.

Within-group analysis demonstrated that learners in the flipped classroom group showed substantial gains in language performance over the eight-week instructional period. The increase in post-test mean scores indicated improvement across assessed language

components, including vocabulary usage, reading comprehension, and productive language tasks. Similarly, learners in the OER-based instruction group exhibited significant improvement from pre-test to post-test, suggesting that exposure to open educational materials supported language development in the online learning environment.

Between-group comparisons of post-test scores revealed a statistically significant difference in favour of the flipped classroom group. Learners who received flipped instruction outperformed those in the OER-based instruction group on the overall language performance test. The calculated effect size indicated a moderate practical impact, suggesting that the difference was not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful. These findings indicate that while both instructional approaches were effective, flipped classroom instruction resulted in higher language performance outcomes in the online EFL context.

Findings from the learner perception questionnaire revealed notable differences between the two instructional groups in terms of engagement and interaction. Learners in the flipped classroom group reported higher levels of engagement during synchronous online sessions, greater participation in communicative activities, and increased opportunities to interact with peers and the instructor. Mean scores for items related to classroom interaction and active participation were consistently higher for the flipped classroom group.

In contrast, learners in the OER-based instruction group reported positive perceptions regarding the accessibility and flexibility of learning materials. Participants highlighted the benefit of having free and easily accessible resources that could be revisited at any time. However, their reported levels of engagement and interaction during live online sessions were lower compared to the flipped classroom group. These findings suggest that while OER-based instruction supports independent learning, it may provide fewer structured opportunities for interaction in synchronous online environments.

Statistical analysis of questionnaire responses confirmed that the differences in engagement and interaction between the two groups were significant. Learners' overall satisfaction with the learning experience was higher in the flipped classroom group, although both groups expressed generally positive attitudes toward online EFL learning.

Qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews provided deeper insight into learners' experiences with the two instructional approaches. Learners in the flipped classroom group frequently reported that pre-class materials helped them feel more prepared and confident during live sessions. Many participants noted that watching instructional videos in advance allowed them to process information at their own pace and participate more actively in discussions and group tasks.

Interview data also revealed that learners valued the use of breakout rooms and collaborative activities in flipped classroom sessions. Participants described these activities as opportunities to practice speaking, clarify misunderstandings, and learn from peers with different linguistic backgrounds. Several learners emphasised that immediate feedback from the instructor during live sessions contributed to their perceived improvement in English skills.

Learners in the OER-based instruction group emphasised the usefulness of open-access materials, particularly for vocabulary development and self-study. Participants appreciated the ability to choose materials that matched their individual learning needs and proficiency levels. However, some learners expressed a desire for more guided interaction and structured communicative activities during live sessions. A few participants also reported difficulty managing independent learning tasks without explicit guidance.

Across both groups, learners identified common challenges related to time management and occasional technical issues associated with online learning. Despite these challenges, most

participants expressed positive attitudes toward technology-mediated instruction and recognised its role in supporting language learning in a multilingual environment.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the comparative effectiveness of flipped classroom instruction and OER-based instruction in an Online ELT Academy within a multilingual EFL context. The findings demonstrated that both instructional approaches positively contributed to learners' language development and supported engagement in online learning environments. However, flipped classroom instruction resulted in higher gains in language performance and stronger learner engagement, particularly due to increased opportunities for interaction, collaborative learning, and structured use of synchronous class time. These results highlight the importance of instructional design that prioritises active learning and meaningful communication in online EFL classrooms.

Based on the findings, several pedagogical recommendations can be made. EFL instructors working in online and multilingual contexts are encouraged to adopt flipped classroom strategies to maximise synchronous class time for communicative tasks and feedback. Pre-class instructional materials should be carefully designed to be concise, accessible, and aligned with learning objectives. At the same time, OER-based instruction should not be overlooked, as open educational materials offer flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and adaptability to learners' linguistic and cultural needs. Integrating high-quality OER as pre-class resources within a flipped framework may further enhance learning outcomes.

Finally, this study suggests directions for future research. Researchers are encouraged to conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of flipped and OER-based instruction on different language skills. Further research involving larger and more diverse participant groups would strengthen the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, future studies may explore hybrid instructional models that combine flipped pedagogy with OER-based materials to support inclusive and sustainable EFL education in multilingual online learning environments.

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