Students' perception of a double-flipped classroom experience in the Degree of Translation and Interpreting: Evidence from the course Language B II English

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Abstract

This paper describes the students' perception of a flipped classroom experience which has been carried out in the course Language B II English in the first year of the Degree in Translation and Interpreting (English-German) at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. A double-flipped classroom model has been used and so students have taken on the role of the teacher in order to show their understanding of a given grammar topic. The data related to participants' perceptions have been gathered from a post-experience survey which shows that, despite enjoying the prior preparation, students do not have a clear preference for the double-flipped classroom. In fact, a significant number of them exhibit a neutral attitude. These findings suggest that a combination of more traditional methodologies with other more active and dynamic ones, such as the double flipped classroom, could provide a more effective response in catering the full spectrum of student preferences.

Keywords: *double-flipped classroom, methodology, collaborative tasks, grammar, English Language Teaching.*

Percepciones de los estudiantes sobre una clase invertida doble en el grado en Traducción e Interpretación: evidencia de la asignatura Lengua B II Inglés

Resumen

En esta comunicación se describe la percepción de los estudiantes sobre una experiencia de aula invertida que se ha llevado a cabo en la asignatura Lengua B II Inglés del primer curso del grado en Traducción e Interpretación de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. La modalidad de clase invertida adoptada es la doble de manera que los estudiantes han asumido puntualmente el rol del profesor para demostrar el nivel de dominio de ciertos contenidos gramaticales. Los datos relativos a la percepción de los participantes, que se han extraído de un cuestionario posterior a la experiencia, muestran que, a pesar de disfrutar de la preparación previa, los estudiantes no poseen una clara preferencia por la clase invertida doble. De hecho, un número significativo muestra una actitud neutral, de lo que se puede extraer que una combinación de metodologías más tradicionales con otras más activas y dinámicas como la clase invertida doble podría dar una respuesta más efectiva a las preferencias y necesidades de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: *clase invertida doble; metodología; tareas colaborativas; gramática; enseñanza de la lengua inglesa.*

Introduction

Lecture-based instruction stands out as one of the most common teaching methods in higher education settings. While it is true that it can be effective for certain purposes such as presenting key concepts or synthesising large amounts of information (Svinicki and McKeachie, 2011), the students' role is rather limited to being "passive recipients of teaching" (Palau and Fornons, 2022). First introduced by Baker (2000), the flipped classroom stands as a more constructivist approach in which students prepare lecture materials prior to class to then devote formal class time to engage in active and collaborative tasks relevant to those materials.

This paper aims at describing the students' perception of a double-flipped classroom experience in the first-year course Language B II English in the Degree of Translation and Interpreting (English-German) at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain). The data regarding the students' perception of the experience have been drawn from a survey with a set of questions about their prior knowledge on the flipped classroom methodology, their study skills when learning a foreign language and their overall satisfaction levels when actually implementing a flipped classroom.

The flipped classroom

The flipped classroom, also known as the inverted classroom (Lage et al., 2000) was popularised by Bergmann and Sams (2012). It represents an instructional paradigm shift for students as they are expected to acquire new content through active learning which is mostly done outside the classroom. Active learning, in turn, involves engaging students in their learning process where knowledge results from the combination of interacting with others together with reflecting on what they are learning. Ideally, active learning also contributes to developing their critical thinking skills.

The advantages of the flipped classroom have been amply discussed in earlier literature. In their recent review of research on the implementation of the flipped classroom in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in particular, Turan and Akdag-Cimen (2020) highlight some of the many advantages of this approach: (i) it provides flexible instruction in terms of both schedule and location; (ii) it allows for self-paced learning; (iii) it promotes greater student engagement and participation which leads to building up an interactive learning atmosphere; (iv) it enhances motivation and thus, academic achievement; and (v) it makes room for the use of educational technologies.

At the practical level, there is more than one way in which a classroom can be flipped. Depending on the number of students, the type of instructional materials and their purpose, and the amount of formal class time, a flipped classroom may fall into one of the following categories (Marawar and Chaudhari 2024: 46-47): (i) standard flipped classroom, (ii) micro-flipped classroom, (iii) discussion-oriented flipped classroom, (iv) demonstration-based flipped classroom, (v) faux-flipped classroom, (vi) group-based flipped classroom, and (vii) virtual flipped classroom.

Reisner (2020) identifies another type of flipped classroom, that is, the double-flipped classroom. In this case, students take on the role of the teacher to teach their mates about a given topic. This is precisely the type of flipped classroom which has been implemented in this study.

Data and methodology

This double-flipped classroom experience has been implemented during the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024 in the first-year course Language B II English at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. This course is part of the compulsory training programme of the Degree of Translation and Interpreting (English-German). During the academic year 2023-2024, the course had approximately 60 enrolments. Bearing in mind the institution

regulations, students may opt for not attending in-person classes, so only those students who attended classes on a regular basis took part in the double-flipped classroom experience, i.e., 29 students.

The specific strategy used in this experience is the traditional student presentation whereby students were asked to work in groups of four to prepare and deliver a specific grammar point to their mates. In order to do so, they were given some resources which included theoretical and practical information in the form of videos, podcasts and other written instructional materials related to the grammar point they had been assigned. They were supposed to use those resources as a starting point as they were also specifically instructed to go beyond that information. As a matter of fact, they were further asked to design one practical exercise for their mates. In this part of the double-flipped classroom, they did not only have to collaborate with the rest of the group members, but also and most importantly, with the rest of their mates because they had to provide them with feedback and extra explanations when needed.

Presentations were always due one week after the grammar point was assigned to a specific group whose members had to work on it during the out-of-class study time. Regarding the preparation of the presentations, two instructions were given: they should not have more than 8 slides, and they should not last longer than 15 minutes. These restrictions were meant to ensure that students actually understood well enough the grammar point themselves so they could synthesise it effectively for their mates. Other than that, students were encouraged to be as creative as possible and to use ICT tools, particularly for the design of the practical exercise.

The data have been drawn from a survey which was completed by the students at the end of the semester, once they had all delivered their presentations. It was completed during class time as part of the assessment of the experience. The survey contained 6 multiple choice questions plus 5 open-answer questions which were aimed at providing information regarding their overall satisfaction levels with the double-flipped classroom, their preferences between traditional lessons and flipped classrooms and some extra details such as the time they spent preparing their grammar point or suggestions as for what aspects needed further exploration during class time.

Results and discussion

The focus will be on three questions whose answers are directly related to the students' perception of the experience, namely, question 1, i.e., *Have you liked to prepare the grammar topics at home and teach them to your classmates?*, question 2, i.e., *Do you prefer to have a more traditional lesson in which the teacher presents all the grammar topics and you do the exercises in class?* and question 5, i.e., *Do you think you have enjoyed more fully the content of the lesson when some of your classmates have revised the grammar contents?*
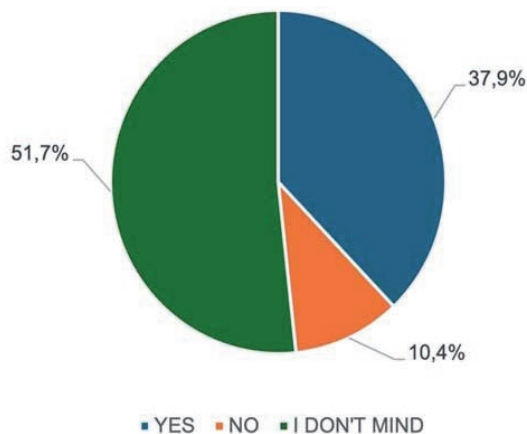

Figure 1. Question 1: Have you liked to prepare the grammar topics at home and teach them to your classmates?

Figure 1 shows that more than half of the students' (51,7%) liked the experience of preparing a grammar point during the out-of-class time to later take on the role of the teacher. They acknowledged that it was a demanding, time-consuming task, yet they valued positively that it provided them with an extra opportunity to practise their English as they are not able to do that once they are outside the academic environment. Apart from that, they liked the feeling of being prepared to deal with a grammar point before class since it boosted their confidence when giving peer feedback. The fact that the task was time-consuming was precisely the main reason behind the negative answers to this question (10,4% of students). Students who responded negatively claimed that they had time management issues, and they felt they needed more than one week to prepare their presentations. Additionally, they found it difficult to explain a grammar point because they lacked the knowledge to tackle certain technical linguistic aspects. A significant percentage of students (37,9%) did not seem to value positively nor negatively the experience. They liked to collaborate with other group members to prepare the presentation and to take on the role of the teacher. At the same time, they enjoy listening to teachers as well as not having to actively participate in class, which they associate with traditional lectures.
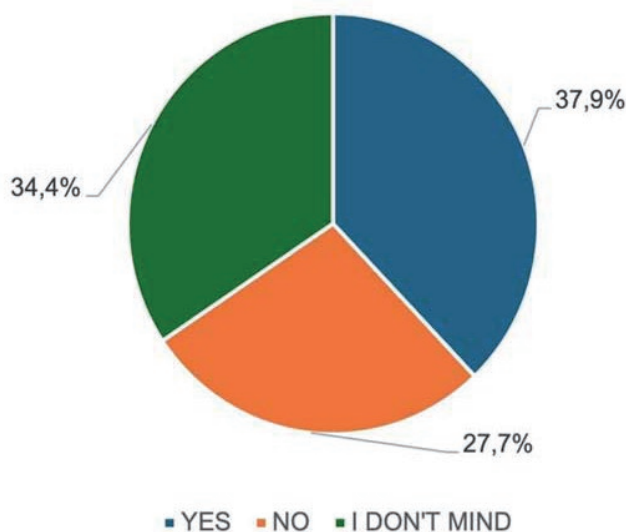

Figure 2. Question 2: Do you prefer to have a more traditional lesson in which the teacher presents all the grammar topics and you do exercises in class?

As regards question 2, which explicitly involves the students' preference between traditional and flipped lessons, Figure 2 reveals a fairly divided perspective. The majority of students (37,9%) showed a neutral attitude, which may indicate that they are flexible and open to various teaching styles, whether traditional or otherwise. A substantial group of learners, 34,4%, preferred the traditional approach because it provides them with more structured lessons. Besides, they found it hard to prepare a grammar point without the teacher guiding them all the time. Only 27,7% of students favoured flipped lessons. They particularly enjoyed group work and the fact that taking on the role of the teaching was a way to test what they had learnt.
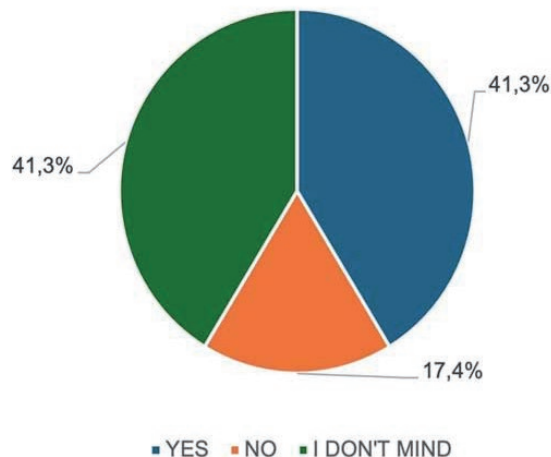
Figure 3. Question 5: Do you think that you have enjoyed more fully the content of the lesson when some of your classmates have revised the grammar contents?

As shown in Figure 3 above, the results obtained from question 5 exhibit a balanced but insightful view of how students perceive peer-led grammar lessons. An equal percentage, 41,3%, responded with "Yes" and "I don't mind," so many students either appreciate or are indifferent to the practice of having classmates teaching them grammar contents. It appears that peer involvement in the teaching of grammar lessons is seen as either beneficial, or at least non-disruptive, to their learning experience in the majority of cases. A smaller group, 17,4%, expressed a preference against this method because they regarded peer-led lessons as less helpful in their learning process.

Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to describe some preliminary results regarding the students' perception of a double-flipped classroom experience in the course Language B II English from the Degree of Translation and Interpreting (English-German) at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

In general, the results obtained do not show a clear preference from the students for double-flipped classrooms. While more than half of them had a positive experience when preparing a grammar point, a significant number of participants were neutral in this regard. Similarly, indifference was the predominant attitude when asked about their preference between traditional and flipped lessons. Their perception regarding the extent to which peer-led grammar lessons were helpful in their learning process was also mostly divided between a positive and a neutral attitude. In this light, a hybrid or adaptable teaching style appears to be more positively valued and so it may be more effective in catering the full spectrum of student preferences.

The findings reported here await further research as additional questions need exploration in the context of a large-scale study where more participants are involved. Results in English Language Teaching courses such as English Language B II English can be compared to those obtained in different courses from other undergraduate programmes as well. It might be also worth exploring variation in students' perceptions in the implementation of different types of flipped classrooms and its impact on factors such as motivation or academic achievement, among others.

Acknowledgements

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