



## FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO EFL YOUNG LEARNERS

**Choiril Anwar**

choirilanwar@unissula.ac.id

Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, Indonesia

### Abstract

Most of Indonesian young learners, particularly elementary school students, are lack of vocabulary so that it is hard for them to improve their English skills such as speaking and reading. Mastering vocabulary then plays a very significant role as the basic need to enhance their competence. A novel strategy is needed to improve EFL (English as a Foreign Language) young learners' vocabulary mastery. Therefore, the writer proposes flipped classroom as an alternative strategy to teach vocabulary for young learners. Flipped classroom in this paper is an instructional approach and a type blended learning type reversing the old traditional educational system by delivering instructional contents or materials, frequently conducted by online and done outside of the classroom. This paper is focused more on viewing the general concepts or insights and the techniques of utilizing flipped classroom that a teacher can apply in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students in which this approach, the writer believes, can also improve both learner's motivation and engagement. This paper is written based on some theories and the writer's analysis as well as reflection of the writer's teaching experience in classrooms. The data were collected by doing library research so that he got the data as the reference from books as well as journals regarding the object of the study.

Keywords: flipped classroom, vocabulary, young learners

### INTRODUCTION

English language teaching in the EFL country as Indonesia starts from the basic level of education until the highest level in university. They begin to learn English by empowering the vocabularies, English patterns or grammar, then they try to speak by using correct utterances or pronunciation. As the result, unfortunately, so many people are still not exactly able to master English. Thus, in mastering language, they may need processes. Moreover, the process of acquiring language also needs time.

To come up with the output of qualified students, the Indonesian government should prepare students to acquire good ability in mastering English language. In this case, the government has done something to improve English language mastery of Indonesian students. One of them is by choosing English as the first foreign language. According to Ramelan (1992), English language has been taught in Indonesia as the first foreign language since the freedom proclamation on 17 August 1945. It had been then applied as an obligatory subject in junior high school, senior high school and in universities or institutes for several terms. Even, it had been tried to be utilized in the fourth grade of elementary school.

Despite in the 2013 curriculum it is claimed that English is no longer as a compulsory subject in elementary schools, but it still becomes an extracurricular material to the students of some playgroups or state elementary schools. At the same time, some private elementary schools convince that English is still obliged to their students. In short, English is still regarded significant in Indonesia.

Because English is still as a foreign language in this country, many Indonesian students, particularly young learners, find that it is very complicated to learn English. It is because of some reasons. First, Therefore, the need of a creative approach in teaching vocabulary to young learners is really urgent and crucial. Flipped classroom is one of alternative strategies to teach vocabulary. It is actually shifting the way teachers provide instruction by inverting traditional teaching methods to engage students in the process of learning (Davies, 2017). Using technology, lectures in this approach are moved out of the classroom and are delivered online as a means to free up class time for interaction as well as collaboration (Shimamoto, 2012). Based on the facts and theories above, the writer would like to give a big effort to describe the use of flipped classroom in teaching vocabulary to EFL young learners.

## **VOCABULARY**

Vocabulary, as defined by Kamil and Hiebert (2005) is knowledge of words and words meaning in both oral and print language and in productive and receptive forms. According to Hiebert (2010), vocabulary is learning of words and word implications. Firstly, words come in two structures: oral and print. Secondly, word learning additionally comes in two structures: receptive and productive. Hornby (1987) stated, "Vocabulary is the total number of words in a language; all the words known to a person or used in a particular book, subject, etc; a list of words with their meanings." Whereas Jackson and Amvela (2000) state that the terms vocabulary, words, and lexicon are synonymous. Furthermore, Young (2010) explains that vocabulary is the study of the meaning of vocabulary, how the vocabularies are used, root words, prefixes and suffixes, and analogies.

There are many types of vocabulary according to some experts. Thornbury (2002) divides vocabulary into two groups, they are *Receptive Vocabulary* (the lexicon which learners grasp when they listen and read or the words they know when learners receive from another) and *Expressive Vocabulary* (the lexicon which learners utilize when they talk or compose, and it is called as active vocabulary).

Based on the explanations above, it can be described that vocabulary is a list or sum of word and term that people know and use in particular language. Moreover, vocabulary is the total number of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speakers' meaning. That is the reason why it is important to learn vocabulary in early age.

## **TEACHING VOCABULARY TO EFL YOUNG LEARNERS**

Teaching language cannot be separated with teaching vocabulary. Vocabulary is considered as an important component in English language teaching. According to Thornbury (2002), vocabulary is a crucial aspect in learning a language as languages are based on words. While Walters (2004) states, it is practically difficult to take in a language without words, even correspondence between individual depends on words. Both teachers and students agree that obtaining of the vocabulary is of focal calculated educating a language.

Based on Hatime (2009), teaching vocabulary in showing the use and function of the word is more effective than teaching vocabulary by providing only the dictionary

definitions of words. Thus, teaching vocabulary is more effective by putting the word of vocabulary in context and indicating the use and function than deliver the definition of vocabulary in dictionary.

In this paper, the writer needs to discuss a little bit clearly about the definition of young learners so that the readers will have the same perception as him. Young learners, based on Slatterly and Willis (2003), are those who are in the age of between 7-12 years while very young learners are defined as under 7 years of age. In teaching vocabulary to young learners, teachers must know the characteristics of young learners first so that they know how to treat them well. According to Ellis and Brewster (2002), young learners are actually different from older learners because they have a lot of physical energy, have a wide range of emotional needs, learn more slowly, forget things quickly, get bored easily and can concentrate for a long time if they are interested in any topic. When a teacher knows and understands well young learners' characteristics as stated, he or she will know what to do regarding the teaching of vocabulary in the classroom. The professionalism of young learners teachers, according to Cameron (2001), requires an underpinning of theoretical knowledge that can help counteract prevalent misunderstandings of the job. These misunderstandings are not just annoying but they may contribute to a continuing devaluation of teaching languages at primary levels.

In teaching vocabulary, the teacher as the class specialist is ought to know the principles in doing it so that the students will get the purpose of learning. The principles, as Linse (2006) claims, are as the following: emphasize direct and indirect teaching, teach vocabulary words before a new activity, teach students how to use context clues appropriately, present multiple exposures to new vocabulary items, give opportunities for deep processing of vocabulary items, teach students to use dictionaries, and have students keep vocabulary notebooks.

### **FLIPPED CLASSROOM**

According to Embi (2014), flipped classroom is a concept of pedagogy that substitutes the format of standard lecture-in-class with an opportunity to find out other concepts and to review materials from outside of classroom.

In its terminology, "flip" is actually taken from the discourse that a usual classroom which is historically a place where the learning material delivery is done through some types of lecture format. In such a classroom, the students are normally given homework assignments to take and do outside of class on their own. The following idea on "flips" such typical classroom in which most of the content is now gained outside of classroom on their own, as homework exercises, and problems are worked through collaboration during class.

There are, in its development, so many styles of flipped classroom and there is no absolutely the rightest technique to employ this idea. Indeed, most of scholars have similar thought that lecture is still appreciated in the classroom if appropriate; however, the focus on lecture will be significantly diminishing during classroom time. Likewise, some are of the opinion that the flipped classroom is considered as an ideology instead of methodology as well as remarks that to do with making connections with the learner distinguishing your learning and teaching styles (Makice, 2012).

Flipped classroom is actually a place to overcome problems, to enhance concepts, and to get engaged in collaborative learnings (Kachka 2012). Whereas Berret (2012) presents the flipped learning idea in the classrooms of higher education level and how it can advance traditional lecture along with student learning. He also adds that flipping is related to the inversion of expectations in the traditional college lectures.

This concept is, after all, different from the standard or conventional lecture style at courses in which students usually come to the class by preparing themselves to absorb knowledge and information from the teacher and then to practice that information through completing homework exercises.

### **THE BENEFITS OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM**

There are of course many benefits of applying flipped classroom. According to Jenkins (2012), this approach can be successful in certain cases. Students are able to approach material and take it in at their own speed. By covering lecture material at home and from a video-based platform, students can privately view the material. This allows them to approach things at their own pace without worry of peers noticing them moving slower or faster. Furthermore, students are able to stop, pause, rewind, and fast forward material so that they can examine things in their own way.

In addition to that, Fulton (2012) claims that by utilizing flipped classroom approach in teaching and learning process, teachers are able to get better insights on students difficulties in instruction and their learning styles, to customize and to update the course curriculum and provide for students 24/7. The classroom duration time will be used more effectively, efficiently and creatively. Moreover, students can be more dynamically involved in the process of learning. As the result, students will then really appreciate the approach, the class, the teacher's effort, also like the teacher and they will get the materials given more easily (Fulton, 2012). In short, this approach is very beneficial for students as long as it is done appropriately by teachers.

### **THE ISSUES OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM**

There must be shortcomings in every approach. This also goes to flipped classroom. As stated by Jenkins (2012) that there are certainly also some issues to the flipped classroom. They include that the flipped classroom method is not going to accommodate every individual perfectly. One of the biggest issues in using flipped classroom is that not all students and schools have access to technologies that can really work for this method. Students from lower income areas and lower income families may not have access to the computers and internet technologies that the flipped classroom requires. The structure really hinges on every student having personal access to his or her own personal device.

Another problem of applying flipped classroom is that students would be spending all of their "homework time" plugged-in in front of a computer screen. Not only do not all students do well with learning from a screen, but this also adds to a students' time in front of a screen and sitting sedentary. While this concern is not singular to the flipped classroom, the teaching concept does not help our young students to get up and get away from their computers, televisions, and iPods.

Moreover, Embi & Panah (2014) declare that the majority of teachers and students consider videos as the method of choice to deliver the out-of-class part of instruction. However, some teachers consider finding good quality videos as a difficult task. The quality of the videos created by teacher is often poor and producing such videos needs lots of time.

From those theories and realities, it can be concluded that applying flipped classroom is actually not as easy as we think. It needs big efforts and creativity from teachers as well as it needs complete facilities regarding the devices and tools for implementing it.

## **FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN TEACHING VOCABULARY**

The process of just flipping a classroom will not transform students' learning. According to a study by Houston & Lin (2012) in Danker (2015) stating that a successful implementation of a flipped classroom would need the videos to be relatively short (no longer than 20 minutes) and teachers should briefly review the course content before in-class activities to answer any questions and to make sure that the majority of the students have sufficient understanding of the material. Kachka (2012) recommends that during the in-class activities, the teacher must be friendly to guide and increase the interaction getting along with the students. In addition, the instructional design using technology needs to be carefully planned to ensure the students' learning experience is enhanced, where students identify learning as their objective.

Actually, there have been some researches conducted dealing with flipped classroom. Murray et al., (2012) studied the perceptions of 100 students who enrolled in online courses. It was reported that the students were not satisfied with such online courses using flat resources. While Anwar & Pratama (2016) highlighted flipped classroom in teaching speaking to junior high school students. They reported that flipped classroom approach was enable to improve students' speaking skill if the teacher made it interactively and attractively so that it would encourage students to speak more.

Whereas, in teaching vocabulary to EFL young learners by using flipped classroom approach, the teacher at least is supposed to do these procedures. Firstly, the teacher has to make sure that a software "windows movie maker" or as such thing been installed in their PC (Personal Computer). Secondly, when it has been installed, the teacher then will write down the script to read from the beginning of video untill the end. The content of the script can be talking about kinds of animals, fruits, vegetables, or some topics young learners like so much in the efforts of enriching students' vocabulary mastery dealing with the syllabus materials in certain semester. Third, the teacher then will prepare the supporting materials to be created in that video. It can be various pictures, clips, illustrating instrumental music, words, quotes, and so forth. Those materials will support the narration uttered by the teacher (narrator).

The next step is that the teacher will record his or her voice reading the script. When recording is done, he or she then inserts the recorded voice and all supporting materials merged to the video format. The teacher should arrange them all in the right order and appropriate sequence so that the video will be interactive and attractive to students. When been ready, the video can be sent or given to the students. The teacher then ask students to watch the video outside of the classroom (can be at home or somewhere), to figure out the contents or message of the material, and to try to answer the questions if needed. Beforehand, the teacher can instruct the students to make group of two or three depending on the total number of the students in such a class.

In the next meeting, the students in one group are then asked to come forward per group to deliver their answers related to the questions given in the video. While listening to the students' answers, the teacher will guide and respond them enthusiastically and interactively. With an interesting and creative activity, the class will be alive and cozy so that students will not hesitate to tell the teacher more on words or vocabularies provided in the video. As the result, if it runs well, the students' vocabulary mastery will be eventually richer than before for sure.

To know that recording the teacher's own notes or material in the video is actually not a must in applying flipped classroom. If it is complicated for some teachers to make their own video recording, they can also use videos available a lot in Youtube or other video providing websites which support their teaching materials in terms of improving students' vocabulary mastery.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Vocabulary mastery is a very important part that EFL young learner students get in the efforts of improving other language skills such as reading and speaking. Flipped classroom can be an alternative and interesting approach for teachers of foreign languages to enrich their EFL young learner students' vocabulary mastery. In applying this approach, teachers should figure out deeply the characteristics of young learners first. In addition to that, teachers must have big efforts and creativity to prepare many things related to the implementation of using flipped classroom. This approach will effect nothing to the young learners' vocabulary only if teachers have no good willingness to improve their students language skills and they have poor skills in operating it.

For some school principals or boards who would like to utilize flipped classroom approach in their schools, they are ought to provide devices needed both in the forms of software and hardware. These supporting materials will ease the application of flipped classroom, no matter what the goals of instruction planned by the school and in the curriculum.

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