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Research Article

A Study of the Effects of Flipped Learning Tools in Improving the Reading Skills of ESL Learners at Undergraduate Level

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of flipped classes in higher education by examining the viewpoints of students regarding reading skills. This study is based on a quantitative research method. The data was collected from 200 BS English students from two universities Dera Ghazi Khan Ghazi University, D.G. Khan and University of Education, D.G. Khan Campus. The findings show that flipped learning environments greatly improve student engagement and academic achievement, owing to the strategic use of technology such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and interactive, student-centered activities

Keywords: Flipped Learning, Reading Skills, ESL Learners, Technological Tools.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the most important skill that helps to build knowledge and learning which is only possible due to proficiency in reading skills. However, in recent years, a different attitude has been developed among ESL learners. They attach their language learning achievement by speaking the English language. They relate their learnability only to good English-speaking skills. Due to this misconception, they find it difficult and boring to translate and comprehend each word from L2 to L1. Such attitudes of learners make the English language learning process the most confronting task. The modern era is an era of science and technology that introduces the whole world with a lot of innovations and advancements. These technological advancements also positively impact the teaching and learning system. Flipped learning is one of its fruits which not only gives easy access to the learning material but is also economical, time saving and somehow more interesting for both students and the teachers. The flipped classroom is one of the most innovative educational approaches to emerge in higher education. The flipped classroom is an educational system in which students get course materials that must be completed outside of the classroom and before class. The flipped classroom concept originated in 2007 and 2008 as a response to students' desire for more explanations of ideas they didn't comprehend (Salifu, 2015). Introducing a flipped classroom as an instructional method of teaching helps engage students while also improving their participation. Clark (2015) describes that it helps kids transition from a less communicative and involved setting to one that focuses on completely engaging them in certain activities with their classmates. To promote student engagement Savory et al. (2012) suggest pushing students, making them feel safe to ask questions and seek assistance,



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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the effects of flipped learning to improve the reading skills of undergraduate ESL pupils
2. To investigate the ESL learner's perspective on the use of flipped learning tools to improve their reading skills

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How much flipped learning strategy is effective in improving the reading skills of undergraduate ESL students?
2. What are ESL learners' attitudes towards the use of flipped learning tools in improving reading skills?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hwang, Lai, & Wang (2015) defines flipped learning as an approach in which class activities are performed at home and homework is done in the classroom. Hamdan (2013) discusses flipped learning as a model in which educators use different technologies to move the direct learning of large groups into individual learning. Sarawagi (2013) defines flipped learning as learning in which low level learning contents such as terms, definitions, basic concepts, etc. are given outside the class whereas high level activity-based learning is given inside the classroom. According to Jarvis (2010), flipped learning provides a student-centered atmosphere that focuses on the student's experience of learning and promotes growth and development of learning as compared to typical classes where instructors are the only source of information.

During a student survey, Gündüz and Akkoyunlu (2019) explored that Flipped learning in higher education increases student involvement and self-responsibility, but it encounters problems such as limited feedback and insufficient internet connectivity. This study examined the effectiveness of face-to-face and online flipped classroom approaches in a reading course, and found that both were equally helpful in enhancing Level 1 students' reading skills. Alhamami and Khan (2019) focused on student experiences and opinions about these techniques. Survey results demonstrated that students had good attitudes about flipped learning, implying that teachers should consider student viewpoints while selecting instructional approaches.

This student-centered approach was highly valued in specialist courses, as evidenced by later studies. Students in an undergraduate biology course expressed high satisfaction with various components of the flipped classroom method, particularly the structure that integrated pre-recorded lectures and in-class exercises (Awidi & Paynter, 2019). During his study, Xiu *et al.*, (2019) investigated learners who had moderately positive opinions toward pre-class video lectures utilized in a flipped undergraduate science class, but there were also significant negative reactions. Strayer (2007) investigates the "effects of flip classroom" and shows the difference between traditional learning and flipped learning. He describes flipped learning as an inverted classroom in which the events are used outside the classroom that were used inside during traditional learning. According to Bishop and Verleger (2013), Flipped learning also includes other learning styles like peer instruction, cooperative and collaborative learning. They also mentioned the clear difference between the restricted and broader definition of flipped learning.

Zain and Sailin (2020) expand the discussion to postgraduate education, emphasizing interaction and collaboration. Another study found that a flipped learning method in a Master of Educational Management program increased student engagement through elements such as enjoyable, active, collaborative, and technology-enhanced learning. Ebron and Mabuan (2021) demonstrated that flipped learning is beneficial in academic writing courses. In research, students gave overall positive comments on the flipped classroom approach to teaching academic English writing, praising the ability to engage with online materials at home and participate in practical tasks in class.

Østerlie & Bjerke (2023) explore how flipped learning affects student motivation and preparation for future responsibilities. The students claimed that flipped learning improves motivation, enriches learning, and prepares them for future teaching in school situations. Singay (2020) research also stresses the benefits of flipped learning in a second language situation, focusing on student viewpoints. The findings revealed that students valued the improved learning environment and increased use of technology, which aided in grammar acquisition and peer collaboration. According to Alebrahim and Ku (2020), Students valued the dynamic and engaging environment produced by the flipped classroom, which contrasted with typical lecture-based learning. This adjustment was identified as a crucial element in increasing their academic involvement. Bergmann and Sams (2014) implemented the flipped classroom instructional technique in a high school chemistry course and discovered that the method increased teacher and peer interaction.

Lai (2021) studied students who feel that flipped learning improves their engagement, performance, and pleasure, with engagement being inherently enjoyable regardless of performance outcomes. Students noted that strong group

peer interaction significantly boosted their engagement, particularly when the activities were difficult, highlighting the importance of supportive group dynamics in boosting their learning experience. According to Fisher & Birdthistle (2021), Pupils recognized that the engagement fostered by flipped learning pedagogies is extremely rewarding, regardless of how they see their performance. This means that the method enhances their educational experience, making the approach intrinsically valuable.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To analyze the learners' perception of flipped learning, the researcher used a descriptive research design. The researcher gathered and analyzed the data numerically through quantitative research methodology. A total of 200 participants were taken from the University of Education, D.G. Khan campus and Ghazi University, D.G. Khan. The samples were further delimited by choosing fifty learners from BS English 2nd semester and 50 from 4th Semester. Data was collected through closed-ended questionnaire which follow Likert Scale. Researcher used SPSS software to analyze the data.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were assembled from 200 undergraduate students from two universities Ghazi University, D.G. Khan and University of Education, D.G. Khan Campus.

Table 1.1. Institute.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	University of Education	100	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Ghazi University	100	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.1 shows that students' responses have been collected from two institutes; 50% from the University of Education and 50% from Ghazi University.

Table 1.2. Semester.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2 nd	100	50.0	50.0	50.0
	4 th	100	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.2 describes that 50% of respondents are from the 2nd semester and, 50% are from the 4th semester.

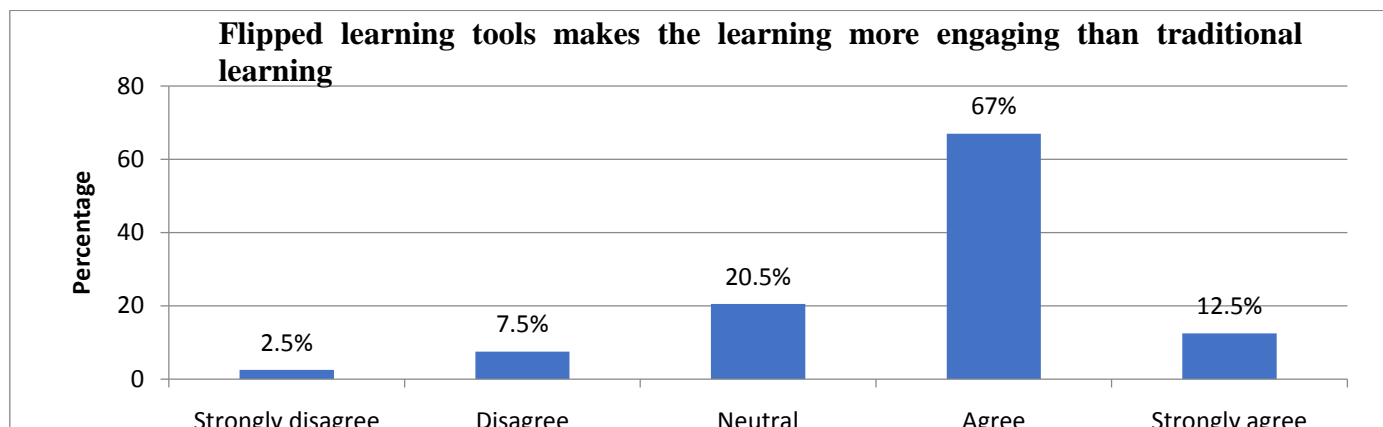


Figure 1.1. Flipped learning tools make learning more engaging than traditional learning.

Figure 1.1 explains that 67% of learners accept the statement, and 12.5% respond as strongly agree. They believe that the use of flipped learning tools makes learning more engaging as compared to traditional learning. Flipped learning targets effectual learning and grants the pupils to perform actively during classroom activities.

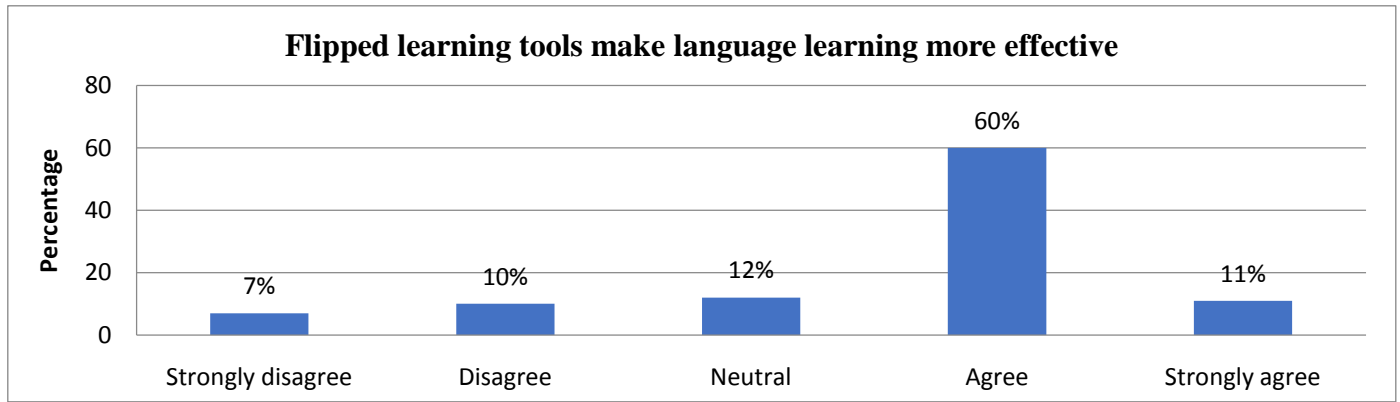


Figure 1.2. Flipped learning tools make language learning more effective.

Figure 1.2 describes that respondents have positively answered the statement that flipped learning tools make language learning more effective. 60% of responders agree with given statement, and 11% strongly agree.

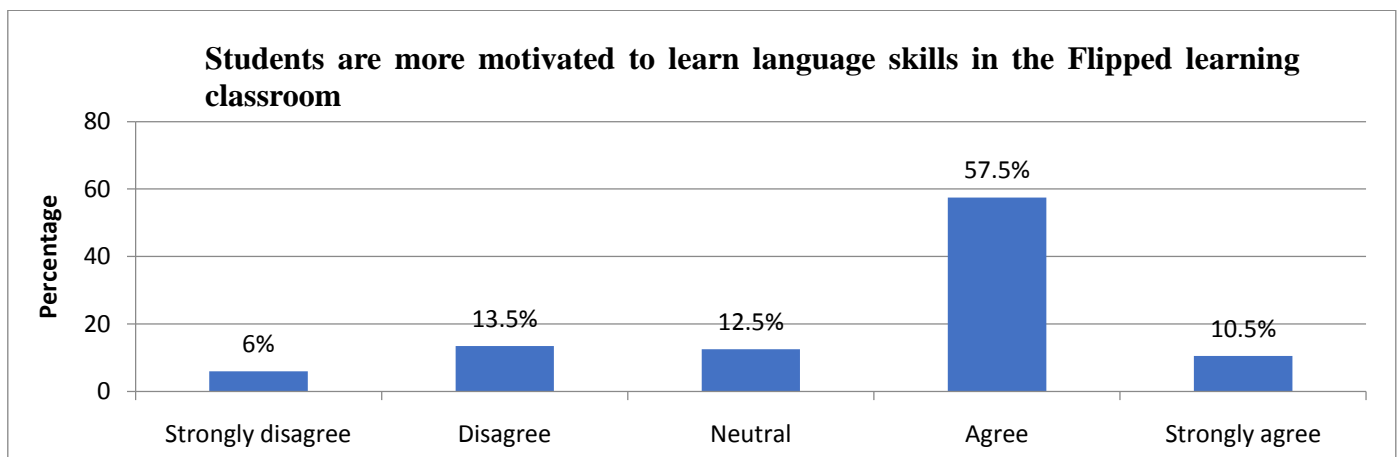


Figure 1.3. Students are more motivated to learn language skills in the Flipped learning classroom.

Figure 3.1 illustrates that 57.5% of respondents responded that flipped learning classrooms motivated them to learn language capabilities. This figure again shows the positive side of the statement. Flipped learning focuses on student-centered learning due to which students are highly motivated to learn and improve their capabilities in the flipped classroom.

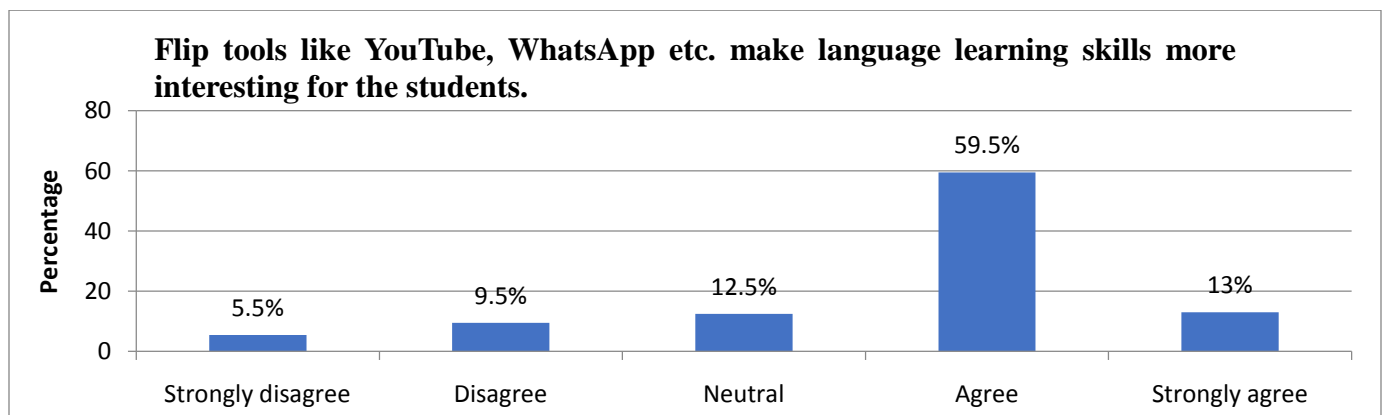


Figure 1.4. Flip tools like YouTube, WhatsApp, etc. make language learning skills more interesting for the students.

Figure 1.4 expresses that most of the respondents find the use of flipped learning tools interesting. This table shows that 59.5% of respondents accept that flipped learning tools make language learning skills more interesting for learners. They assume that these tools provide them with such an environment that increases their interest level in learning all language skills.

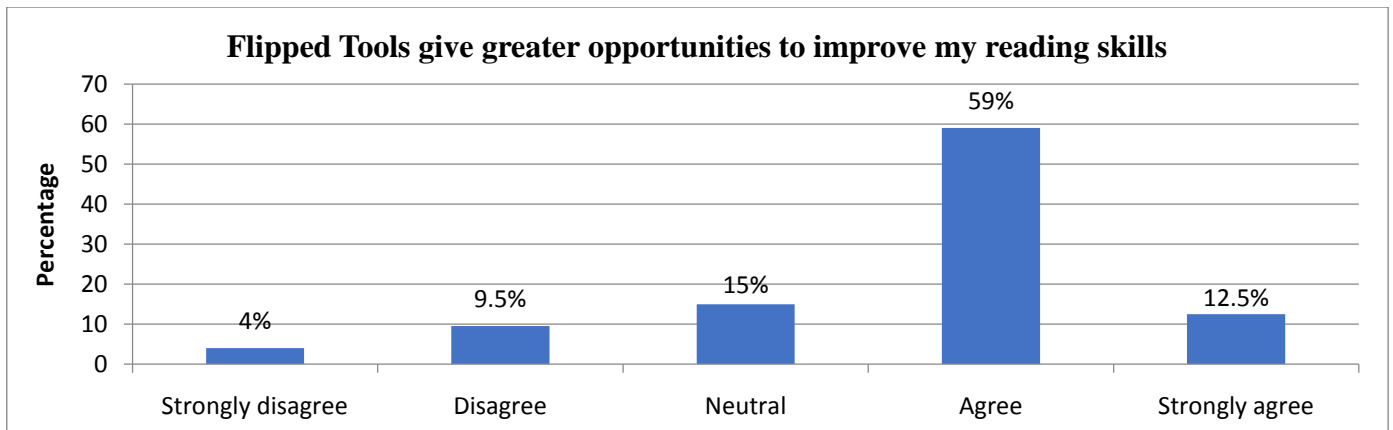


Figure 1.5 Flipped Tools give greater opportunities to improve my reading skills.

Figure 1.5 gives information about the perception of the students about the utilization of flipped learning tools to improve their reading skills. It describes that 71.5% of learners respond to the statement “Like other language skills, flipped tools give me greater opportunities to improve my reading skills” positively by accepting this.

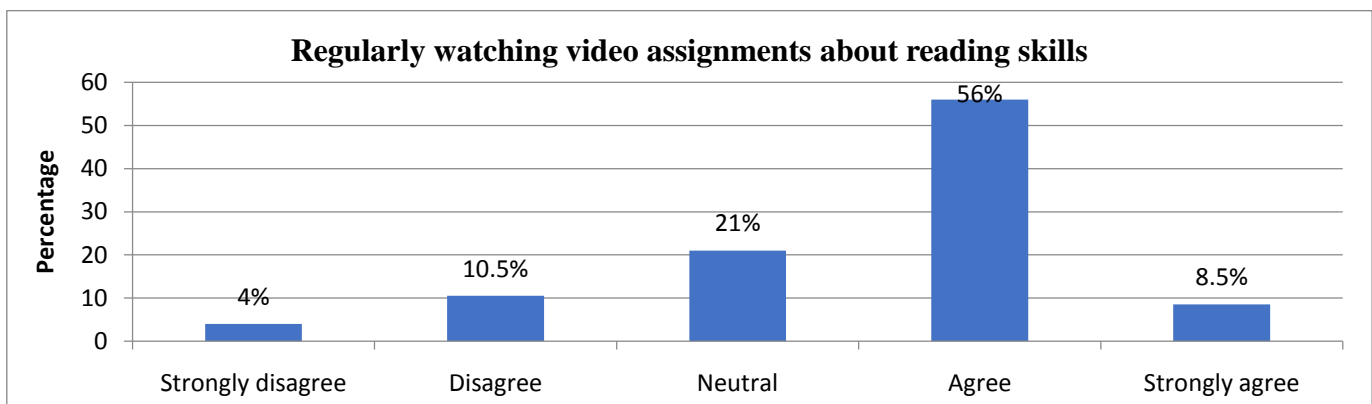


Figure 1.6. Regularly watching video assignments about reading skills.

Figure 1.6 mentions learners' perception about the use of flipped learning tools which help the students to watch video assignments about reading skills regularly. This table shows that 56% of respondents agree, and 8.5% strongly agree with this assertion. Flip tools provide a platform to watch online videos and most respondents accept this statement.

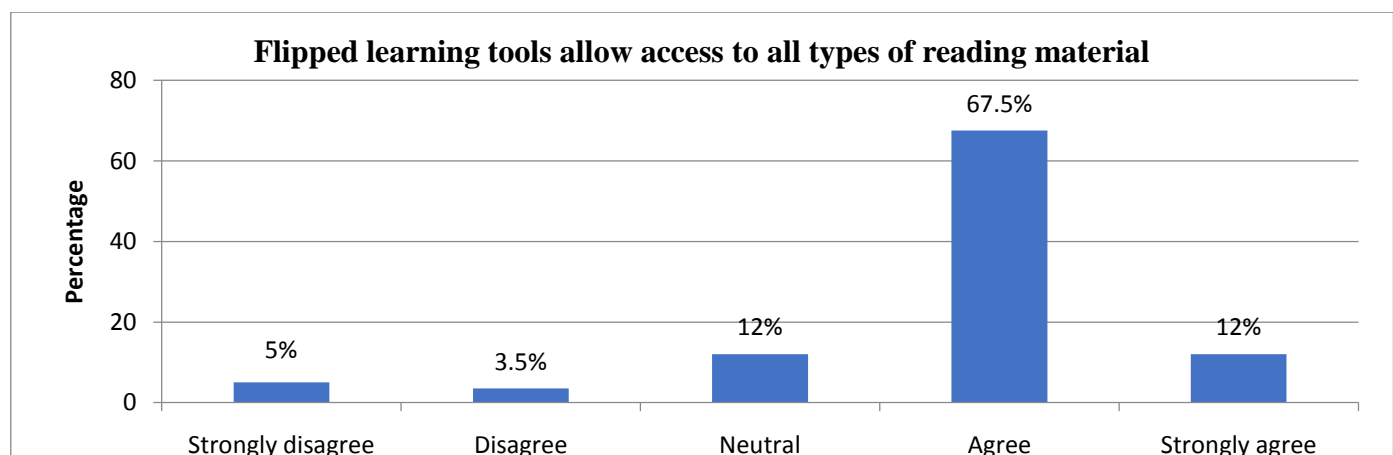


Figure 1.7. Flipped learning tools allow access to all types of reading material.

Figure 1.7 illustrates that 79.5 % of learners accept that flipped learning tools give them access to all types of reading material easily. The online platform and PDF format of reading material through flipped learning tools provide them unlimited access to the reading material.

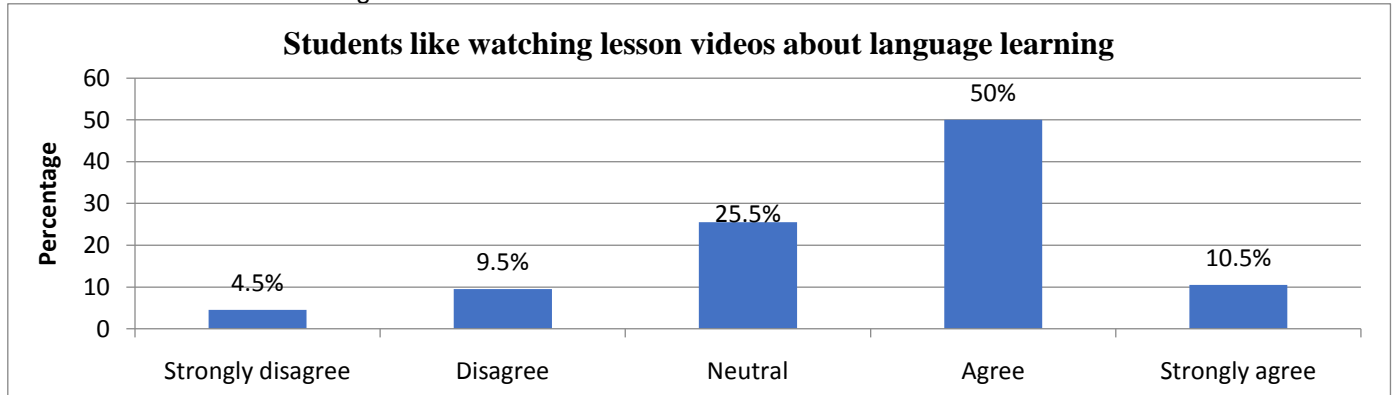


Figure 1.8. Students like watching lesson videos about language learning.

Figure 1.8 discusses the learners' liking to watch lesson videos through flipped learning tools to improve their language skills. This table gives the image that 60.5% of respondents show their acceptance of this statement. Flipped learning tools provide a proper platform to display lesson videos, so learners find it interesting and easier to watch videos of lessons about language at any time and anywhere.

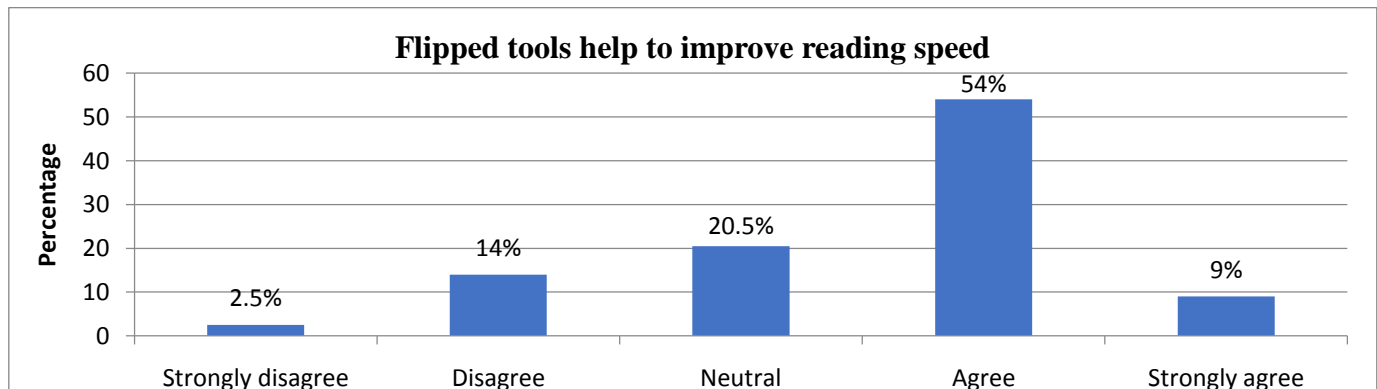


Figure 1.9 Flipped tools help to improve reading speed.

Figure 1.9 specifies that 54% of responders agree and, 9% strongly agree that flipped learning tools help them to improve their reading speed. Flipped tools provide different activities regarding practicing reading that learners find helpful to enhance their reading speed.

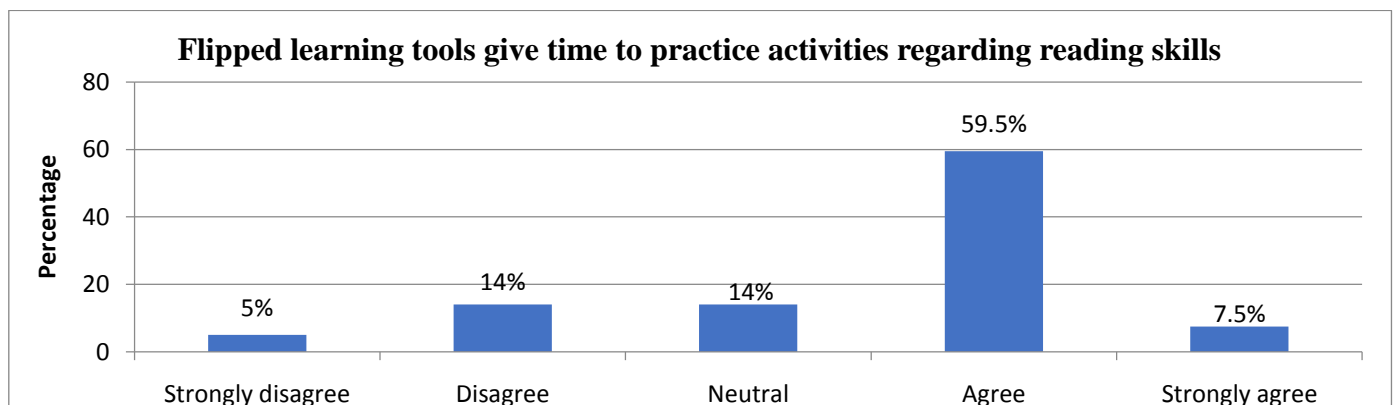


Figure 1.10 Flipped learning tools give time to practice activities regarding reading skills.

Figure 1.10 describes the perceptions of the learners about their participation in activities regarding reading skills. A total of 66.5% of respondents accept the statement and believe that flipped learning tools give them enough time to practice more exercises regarding reading skills. The main focus of flipped learning is on interactive and project-

based activities. Due to that most learners believe that flipped learning engages them in different language learning activities like reading skills.

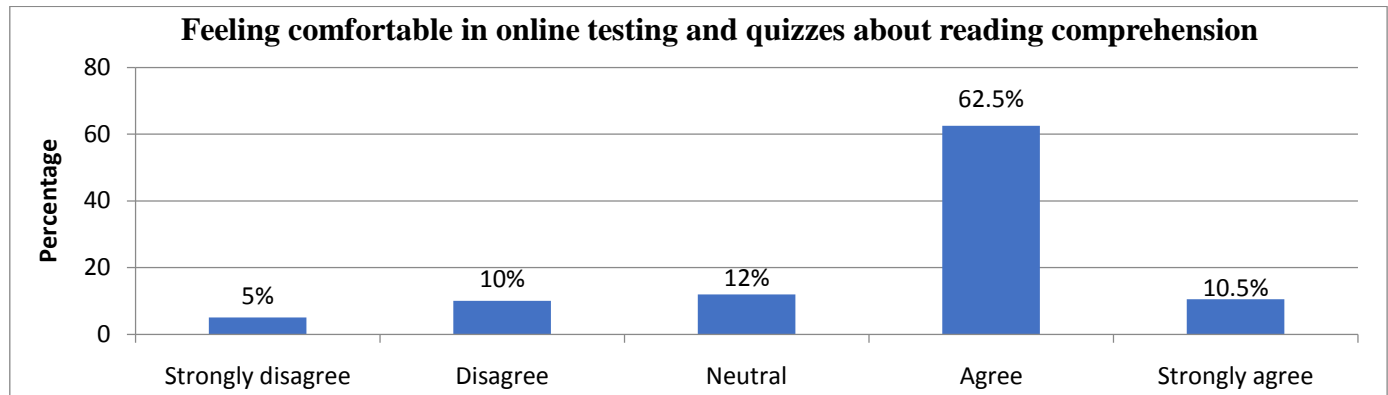


Figure 1.11 Feeling comfortable in online testing and quizzes about reading comprehension.

Figure 1.11 shows that 72.5% of learners feel comfortable taking online tests and quizzes regarding reading comprehension. They agree with online testing and quizzes because they can attempt their test and quizzes regarding reading comprehension at any place in a free atmosphere with a refreshed mind and flip learning allows them to do that freely as compared to traditional learning.

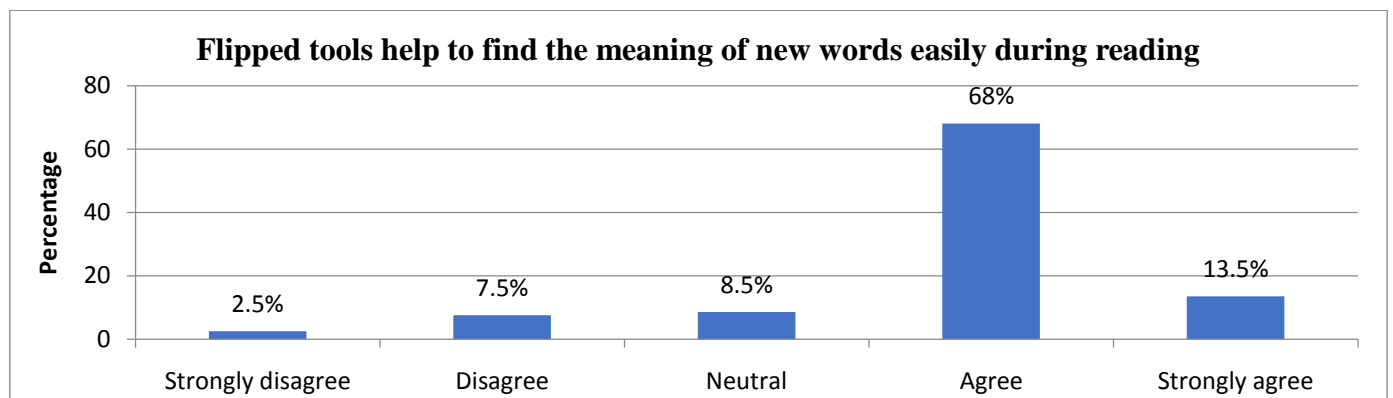


Figure 1.12. Flipped tools help to find the meaning of new words easily during reading.

Figure 1.12 shows the perceptions of the learners about the statement that flipped learning tools help the learners to find new words and their meanings during reading. Almost 81.5% of learners support this statement of which 68% of learners answer agree and 13.5% of learners answer strongly agree.

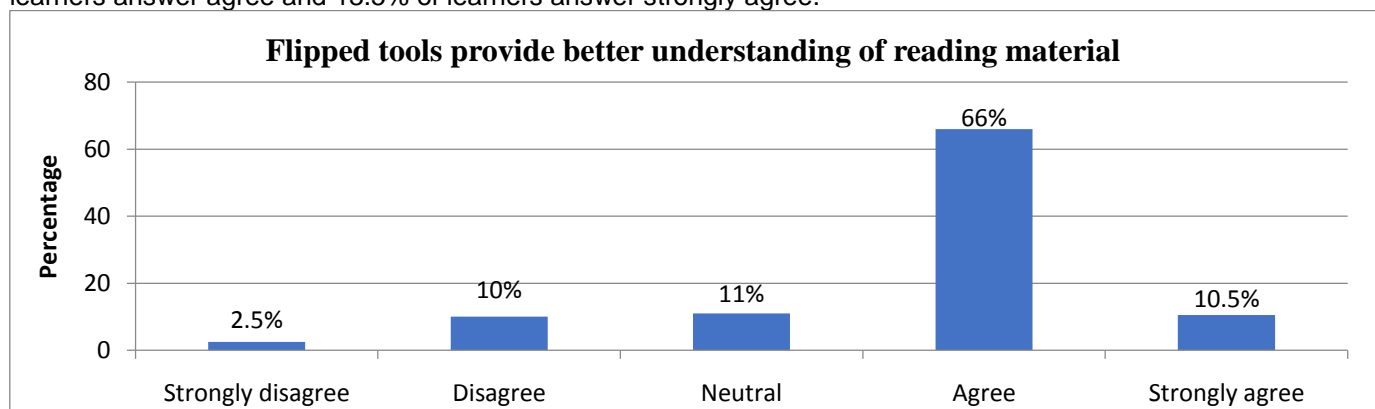


Figure 1.13. provides a better understanding of the reading material.

Figure 1.13 indicates learners' opinions on the idea that flipped learning tools give a better and more critical understanding of the reading material. The total acceptance ratio of this statement is 76.5%. The interactive learning environment and active involvement in reading activities during flipped classrooms provide the students better understanding of reading material.

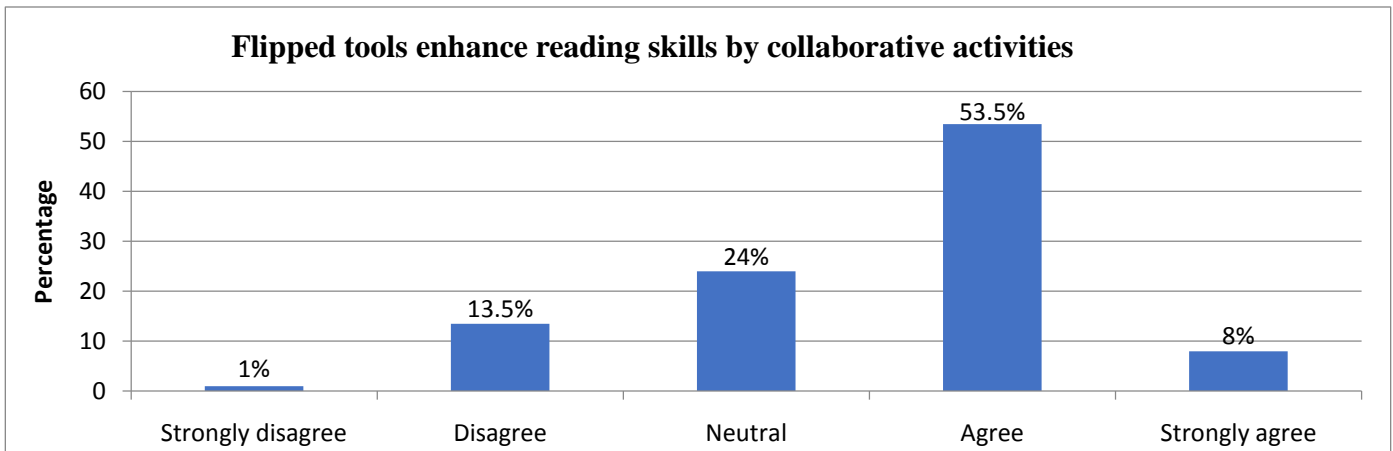


Figure 1.14. Enhancing reading skills through collaborative activities.

Figure 1.14 shows the opinions of the learners about their enhancement of reading skills through collaborative activities. Almost 61.5% of respondents favor this statement. They think that flipped tools allow the learners to participate in interactive and collaborative activities freely regarding reading skills which are not possible in traditional language learning classrooms.

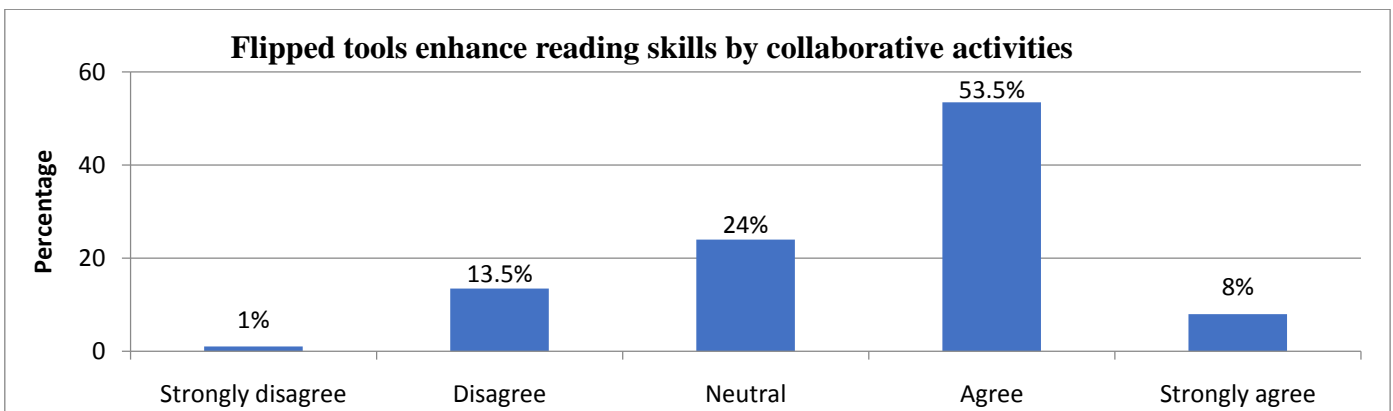


Figure 1.15. Enhancing reading skills by collaborative activities.

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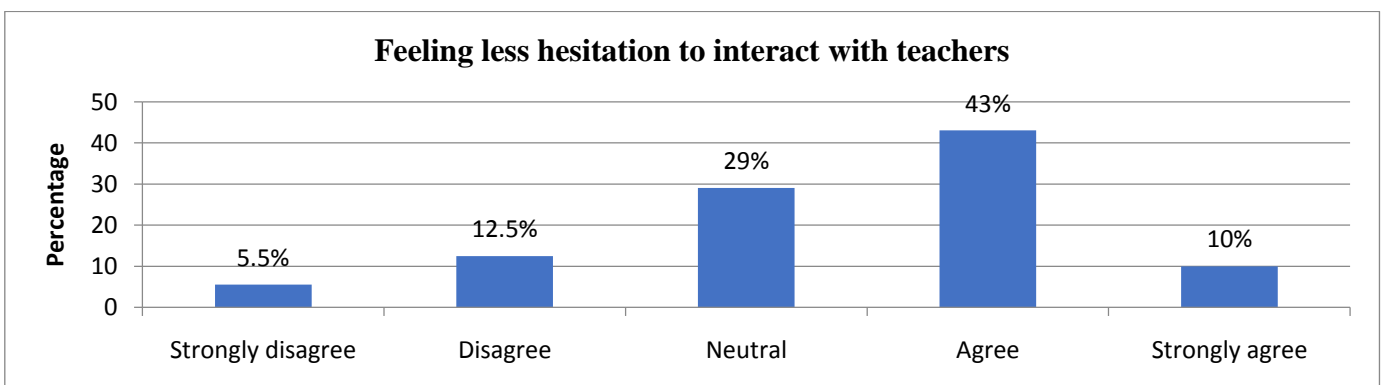


Figure 1.16. Feeling less hesitation to interact with teachers.

Figure 1.16 mentions the learner's feeling of hesitation to interact with the teacher during flipped learning. The results show that 53% of respondents feel less hesitation to interact with the teacher during language learning. Flipped tools like (WhatsApp, Google Meet, MS Team, etc.) give opportunities to interact with the teachers easily.

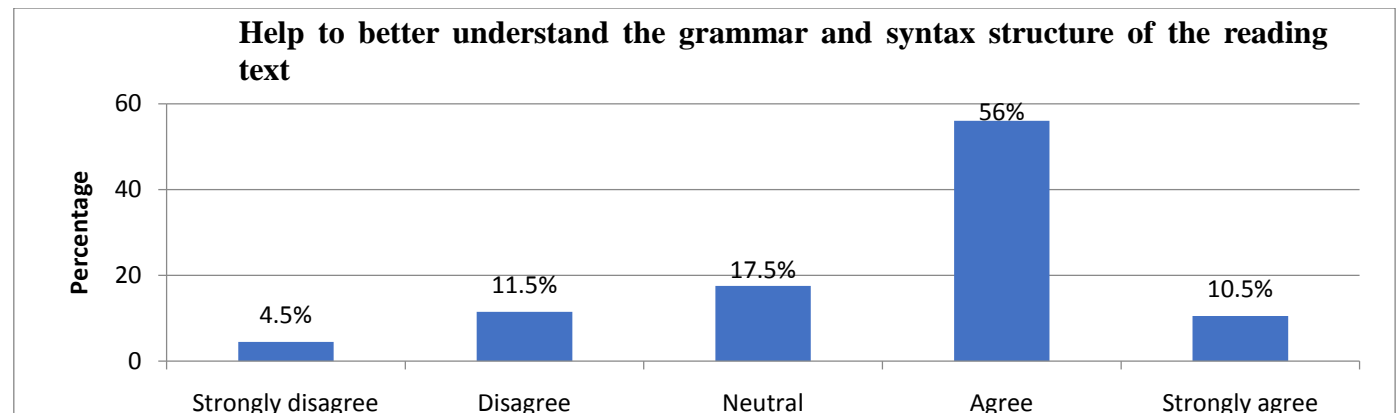


Figure 1.17 Helping to better understand the grammar and syntax structure of the reading text

Figure 1.17 describes that 56% of respondents from both universities accept that flipped tools give a better apprehension of grammar and syntax reading text. Flipped learning concerns the active participation of learners in learning activities, due to comprehension exercises, quizzes related to the syntactical structure of the text, and video lessons give a proper understanding of the syntax structure to the learners.

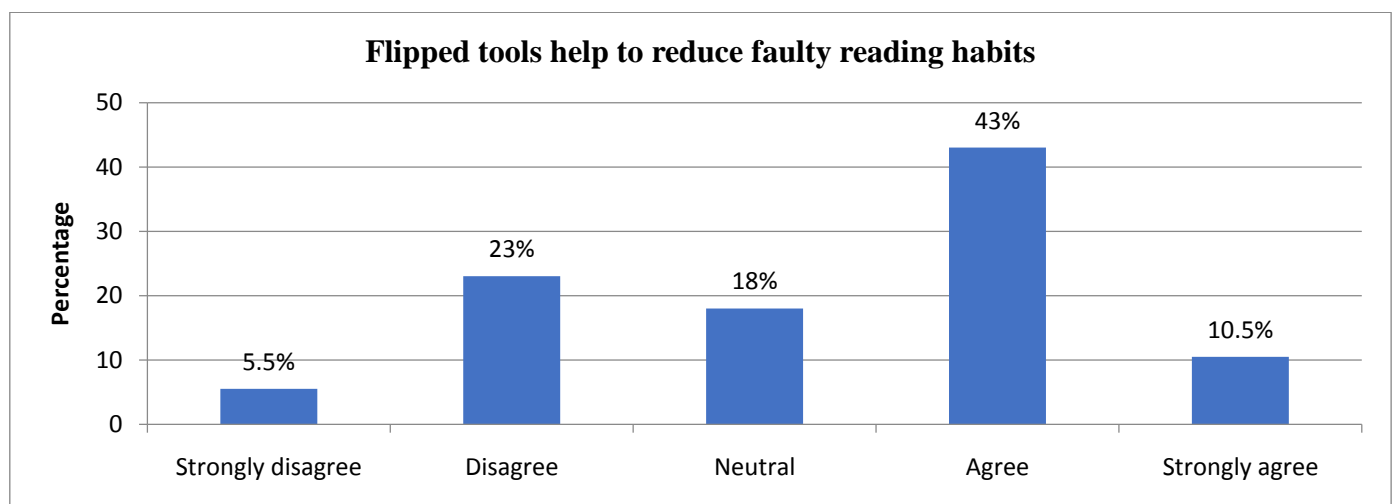


Figure 1.18. Help to reduce faulty reading habits.

Figure 1.18 states learners' opinions about the idea that Flipped learning tools help to reduce faulty reading habits like (finger and head movement, regression, vocalization, etc.) This table shows that 53.5% of respondents from the whole population believe that flipped tools reduce their faulty reading habits.

DISCUSSION

The findings after analyzing the data, show that students are in favor of using flipped learning tools. They gave positive views regarding the use of flipped learning tools in improving their reading skills. The first research question for this study is concerned with how effective a flipped learning strategy is in improving reading skills in undergraduate ESL students. The findings of this research revealed the important role of the flipped learning approach that positively influences the reading skills of the learners. Flipped learning is an effective strategy as it allows the learners to be more engaged in learning as compared to traditional learning process. Bossaer *et al.*, (2016) discuss the effectiveness of their study and mention that flipped learning allows learners to more engage in class activities and achieve high grades through critical thinking. So, teachers should use this learning approach during their teaching. The findings of this research support the previous studies that discuss the effectiveness of flipped learning (Hung, 2017; Wu *et al.*, 2017). The effectiveness of flipped learning can be analyzed as it allows the

learner to actively participate in classroom activities. Bishop and Verleger (2013), discuss the effectiveness of flipped learning in their research study. They described that flipped learning consists of various learning styles like cooperative and collaborative learning that improve the learners' understanding level of the contexts.

The next question of this study highlighted the point of view of learners about the use of flipped learning to improve their reading skills. The results showed that learners are more satisfied and feel comfortable using flipped learning and its tools during their class times. Flipped learning tools help pupils refine their reading speed and find revived words and their meaning during reading. Flipped learning tools give a better and more critical understanding of the reading material. Flipped tools enhance their reading skills through collaborative activities. *Flipped tools give learners opportunities to self-evaluate reading skills and save time for the students.* Flipped tools give a better perception of grammar and syntax structure of reading text to the learner and reduce their faulty reading habits.

Hammerman (2016) and Yu-Lung et al. (2011) revealed that the implementation of flipped learning becomes accessible due to the advancement in technology. Through the usage of technological tools, teachers and learners can interrelate with each other without difficulty. Davies et al. (2013) investigated efficiency of technology used in flipped learning to expand learners' achievements. The outcomes proved that application of technology makes learning more effective as compared to traditional learning. Many researchers described that through various learning activities, flipped learning enriches the inspiration of learners. As autonomous learning, flipped learning boosts the self-confidence of the learners (Galway et al., 2014; Enfield, 2013). McLaughlin (2014) argued that flipped learning promotes pupils' motivation for future studies. In their study, Leach and Butler (2009) amalgamated learners' involvement in learning with their level of motivation.

CONCLUSION

After the analysis of these findings, it can be summed up that as compared to traditional way of teaching flipped learning is more effective and sufficient way of learning which helps to enhance all language skills of the learners. It gives proper learning environment to the learners which positively affects learners' achievements and performances. Through this approach, students can get a better understanding of the learning context. Flipped learning develops confidence and interest among the learners regarding language skills. This approach gives the chance for collaborative learning to the learners and allows them to interact with their peer fellows during learning. The in-class activities develop their confidence and interest in learning process and they easily participate in learning activities without any hesitation and boredom.

Flipped learning also provides easy access for the students to the teachers and they can easily share their problems with their teachers. Due to this, they can confidently participate in classroom discussions. Online assignments and online discussion sessions about any reading material encourage the learners to read the text with critical understanding. Flipped learning allows the teachers to interact and pay attention to the problems of the learners that they face during reading. Flipped learning tools allow the learners to use collaborative activities in their online classes that increase confidence and interest among the learners. These collaborative activities develop the attitude of co-working among the learners. It also provides a free atmosphere for learning. Learners feel free and participate in classroom activities without any stress.

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