



## Flipping A Prep School EFL Class: Students' Perspective<sup>1</sup>

Soner SÖZLER<sup>2</sup>

Received: 08 October 2018, Accepted: 03 November 2018

### ABSTRACT

This current study presents the results of a research about changing the stream of a traditional prep school class into a flipped one. 23 students (f:13, m: 10) studying at a government university participated in the research. The research took 14 weeks to be carried out in the spring term of 2016-2017 academic year. During the research, the researcher changed the weekly face-to face schedule of the EFL class into flipped one with an aim of observing the effects of the flipping procedure on students' school grades and their motivation. Also, the students were enrolled to an LMS to make synchronous classes each week. Then, demo classes for one week were carried out in order to orientate the students to the LMS software. In order to be able to reach the perspectives of the students, both an online questionnaire and individual interviews were employed. During the data collection phase of the study, in order to reach students' perspectives both an online questionnaire and individual interviews were carried out. The results indicated that using a flipped EFL model is more effective than a traditional EFL class to improve the English level. In addition, the students were asked to express their feelings about language learning by individual interviews. Moreover, all of the students expressed that having no obligations and limitations made us focus on our topic more effectively and by this way we could study English whenever and wherever we wanted. To sum up, this study revealed that flipping a prep school class can boost students' academic success, their motivation and also can contribute to their economic situation.

**Keywords:** Flipped Classroom Model, Blended Learning, Traditional EFL Class, Qualitative Case Study, LMS.

### EXTENDED ABSTRACT

#### *Purpose and Significance*

This current study presents the results of a research about changing the stream of a traditional prep school class into a flipped one. The aim of the study was to show the effects of flipped classroom model on traditional EFL classroom students' academic success and their motivation. This study offers new teaching models for the traditional prep schools to keep up with the requirements of the 21st century classrooms.

#### *Methods*

23 students (f:13, m: 10) studying at a government university participated in the research. The research took 14 weeks to be carried out in the spring term of 2016-2017 academic year. During the research, the researcher changed the weekly face-to face schedule of the EFL class into flipped one with an aim of observing the effects of the flipping procedure on students' school grades and their motivation. Also, the students were enrolled to an LMS to make synchronous classes each week. Then, demo classes for one week were carried out in order to orientate the students to the LMS software. In order to be able to reach the perspectives of the students, both an online questionnaire and individual interviews were employed.

#### *Results*

<sup>1</sup> This study was presented at 3rd BELL International Conference (17-18 May, Zonguldak)

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, School of Foreign Languages, [soner.sozler@beun.edu.tr](mailto:soner.sozler@beun.edu.tr)

The results indicated that using a flipped EFL model is more effective than a traditional EFL class to improve the English level. In addition, the students were asked to express their feelings about language learning by individual interviews. Moreover, all of the students expressed that having no obligations and limitations made us focus on our topic more effectively and by this way we could study English whenever and wherever we wanted. They also added that this way made an economical contribution to them because of having time to work part-time and no payment for school shuttle. Lastly, the study reveals that before the exams, especially the important ones, the students revised the classes more than ten times in order to understand the topic better. To sum up, this study revealed that flipping a prep school class can boost students' academic success, their motivation and also can contribute to their economic situation.

### *Discussion and Conclusions*

Most of the prep schools in Turkey have traditional classroom models which includes 4 to 6 hours face to face class each day of a week. Moreover, these prep schools have a very tight schedule that is hard to keep up for the students. These kind of harsh conditions make the students demotivated and therefore they give up studying or they just want to attend the classes because of attendance issues. This situation makes traditional classrooms full of physically here but mentally there students. However, when you offer them more flexible conditions, they find easier to keep up with the education.

So, a flipped model of EFL classroom which is set up by the instructors and the students can make the students more motivated. By this way, more motivated students will start to enjoy their class and also this makes them get better input. Thanks to this better input, better scores and better outcomes can be gained. To sum up, more interactive curriculums can be more beneficial for the students. Also, mobile learning has an incredible potential for learning English. If this potential is used in a correct way, it is possible to get the learning out of class and school. Therefore, learning will be ubiquitous (anywhere, anytime).

# Bir Yabancı Dil İngilizce Hazırlık Sınıfını Ters-Yüz Etmek: Öğrencilerin Bakış Açısı<sup>1</sup>

Soner SÖZLER<sup>2</sup>

**Başvuru Tarihi:** 08 Ekim 2018, **Kabul Tarihi:** 03 Kasım 2018

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitimi veren bir geleneksel (yüz yüze) hazırlık sınıfı modelinin ters yüz edilmiş sınıf (flipped classroom) modeline çevrilmesine yönelik bir araştırmanın sonuçlarını sunmaktadır. Araştırmaya bir devlet üniversitesinde öğrenim gören 23 lisans hazırlık öğrencisi (f: 13, m: 10) katılmıştır. Söz konusu araştırma, 2016-2017 eğitim-öğretim yılı bahar döneminde 14 hafta boyunca devam etmiştir. Araştırma sırasında araştırmacı geleneksel eğitim modelinin ters yüz edilmiş modele dönüştürülmesinin öğrencilerin okul notları ve motivasyonları üzerindeki etkilerini gözlemlemek amacıyla İngilizce hazırlık sınıfının haftalık yüz yüze ders programını ters yüz edilmiş bir programa dönüştürmüştür. Ayrıca, öğrenciler her hafta eş zamanlı ders yapmak için bir Öğrenme Yönetim Sistemi'ne kaydedilmişlerdir. Bu işlemin ardından öğrenenlerin söz konusu sisteme uyum sağlamaları ve olası aksaklıkları önlemek amacıyla 1 hafta boyunca deneme dersleri yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın veri toplama aşamasında öğrencilerin bakış açılarına ulaşabilmek için hem çevrimiçi anket hem de bireysel görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, öğrencilerden bireysel görüşmelerle dil öğrenme konusundaki duygularını ifade etmeleri istenmiştir. Bu araştırmalar sonucunda ters yüz edilmiş İngilizce eğitim sınıfı modelinin kullanılmasının, İngilizce seviyesini geliştirmek için geleneksel bir İngilizce hazırlık sınıfından daha etkili olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, tüm öğrenciler yükümlülük ve sınırlamaların olmamasının konuyu daha etkili bir şekilde ele almalarını sağladığını ve bu sayede istedikleri her yerde ve zamanda İngilizce çalışabildiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Dahası, böyle bir eğitim modeli sayesinde gerek okula daha az gelmelerinden gerek ise yarı zamanlı çalışmak için zaman bulabildiklerinden ekonomik olarak da fayda gördüklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Son olarak, öğrenme yönetim sisteminin istatistikleri öğrencilerin, özellikle önemli olan sınavlardan önce, her bir konuyu daha iyi kavramak için 10 kereden daha fazla kez revize ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Özetle bu çalışma ters yüz edilmiş bir eğitim modelinin hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin akademik başarılarını arttırdığını, ekonomik durumlarına katkıda bulunabildiğini ve böylelikle motivasyonlarının da yükseldiğini ortaya koymuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ters Yüz Edilmiş sınıf, Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce Eğitimi, Öğrenme Yönetim Sistemleri, Geleneksel Eğitim.

## 1. Introduction

21st century has brought vast amount of technological developments. These developments can be seen in all aspects of daily life. In addition to daily life improvements, education era has also been affected by technological developments. Classroom settings have turned chalkboard into smartboards. As an instance, FATİH project, the biggest educational project in Turkey (Nebil, 2016), is aiming to distribute 10 million tablets to students and in the scope of the project more than 400.000 smartboards have been set up to government schools. Also, teachers have been given lap tops and faster internet access points have been set up to the schools (Nebil, 2016). Therefore, it is possible to get the learning out of the class. However, only technological investments are not enough for this. A theoretical approach is also needed to decide how to integrate technology to education.

At this point, blended learning can be used as a theoretical approach. Because blended learning is defined as the practice of using both online and in-person learning experiences when teaching students. In a blended-learning course, for example, students might attend a class taught by a teacher in a traditional classroom setting, while also independently completing online components of the course outside of the classroom. In this case, in-class time may be either replaced or supplemented by online learning experiences, and students would learn about the same topics online as they do in class—i.e., the online and in-person learning experiences would parallel and complement one another (Partnership, 2013).

Also called hybrid learning and mixed-mode learning, blended-learning experiences may vary widely in design and execution from school to school. For example, blended learning may be provided in an

<sup>1</sup> Bu çalışma 3. BELL Uluslararası konferansında sunulmuştur. (17-18 Mayıs 2018, Zonguldak)

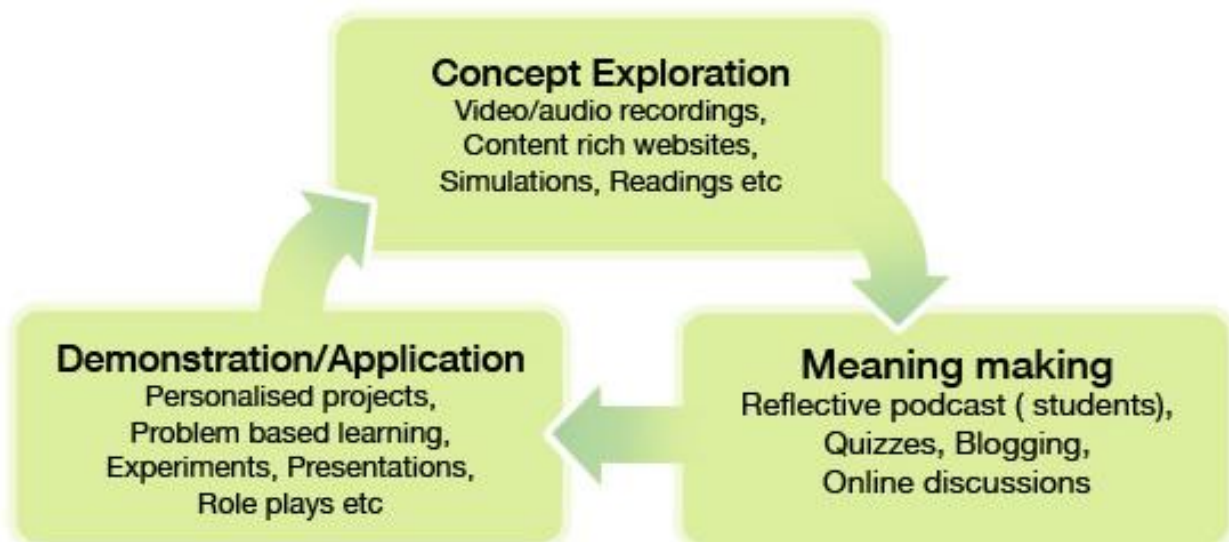
<sup>2</sup> Öğr. Gör. Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu, [soner.sozler@beun.edu.tr](mailto:soner.sozler@beun.edu.tr)

existing school by only a few teachers or it may be the dominant learning-delivery model around which a school's academic program is designed. Online learning may be a minor component part of a classroom-based course, or video-recorded lectures, live video and text chats, and other digitally enabled learning activities may be a student's primary instructional interactions with a teacher. In some cases, students may work independently on online lessons, projects, and assignments at home or elsewhere, only periodically meeting with teachers to review their learning progress, discuss their work, ask questions, or receive assistance with difficult concepts. In other cases, students may spend their entire day in a traditional school building, but they will spend more time working online and independently than they do receiving instruction from a teacher. Again, the potential variations are numerous (Partnership, 2013).

As it can be understood from the definition above, blended learning has some different forms. One of these forms is flipped classroom model. The flipped classroom is a blended learning strategy with the aim to improve student engagement and outcomes. It is not a new concept and can be equated with pedagogies such as active learning, peer instruction, case-based or problem-based learning, or, any blended learning strategy that requires students to prepare learning before they meet and engage with peers in purposeful activities.

As the Higher Education Academy (HEA) states (2017), 'there is a huge range of different blended approaches; the balance between online and face-to-face components, and the integration of other methods, depends on the needs of learners and the context within which the learning is implemented.'

The key purpose of the flipped classroom is to provide a greater focus on students' application of conceptual knowledge rather than factual recall or straight transfer of information (See Diagram 1). Therefore the design of purposeful activities becomes (Academy, 2017).



**Diagram 1.** Learning Opportunities of the Flipped Classroom (Adapted from Gerstein)

The definitions given above also provide the differences between traditional classroom model and a flipped classroom model. Although both of them have their own strong points, flipped classroom model is more flexible and adaptable. So, it can be said that students can manage and shape their own learning in a flexible environment (See Picture 1).

<h1>Benefits of a Flipped Classroom</h1>	
<b>Students</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students learn at varying speeds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers focus on being the “Guide on the Side” not the “Sage on the Stage”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are provided opportunities for review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers spend more time supporting students with practice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons front-load students for classroom activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are involved with student learning rather than lecture.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials are ready and prepared for students who are absent or sick.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers spend less time on classroom management of student behaviors.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents can view lessons and better assist students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are able to provide one on one and small group assistance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students do not struggle with completing homework because they “forgot” how.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are not spending extra hours tutoring and re-explaining to students who didn’t understand the class lesson.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students take ownership of their learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers collaborate with peers in creating materials.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are actively working with their peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers connect with students.</li> </ul>

**Picture 1.** Benefits of a Flipped Classroom (Adapted from Gerstein)

In the light of the framework given above, this study has investigated the effect of flipping a traditional EFL class on students’ academic success and motivation. Therefore, two basic research questions were addressed in this study. These questions were:

1. Is there any significant difference on students’ school grades compared to school average?
2. What kind of contributions do the students feel after flipping their classroom?

## 2. Method

This qualitative case study was conducted in a prep school belong to a government university located in Black Sea region of Turkey. Totally 23 (13 Female, 10 male) prep school students aged between 18 and 21 attended to the study. Before the study, the required permissions were taken from both school board and the university board. It nearly took six weeks to get them. After official issues, the weekly program of the traditional class were changed in to a flipped program in which 8 hours of the class were out of the school and 14 classes were at school in a week. This shift has been done with the help of the students in order to be able to find the best weekly schedule. Totally each student had 22 hours of EFL class in a week. At the same time, students were registered to a LMS by the researcher. Then, 6 pilot classes were done in order to check the equipment and the class materials. During pilot classes, students were informed about the flipped classroom procedures. These were;

- Each student has a week to watch the lectures online
- Without watching or attending the previous online lecture the next lecture cannot be attended or watched
- A student can attend via a mobile phone or in the language lab at the school

After completing the pre-stage of the study, the researcher made classes for 14 weeks and after the implementation an online questionnaire and individual interviews were employed in order to reach the students deeper feelings. The questionnaire and the interviews were in Turkish because the students had A2 level English and it was not realistic for them to express themselves deeply. The questionnaire was 5

Likert scale questionnaire and it had 15 questions (See Appendix 1). In the interviews 5 questions were addressed to the students. The questions were;

- Do you think that this new model of learning is more advantageous than the old one?
  - If yes, what kind of advantages does it have?
- Did you feel that you learned better?
  - If yes, can you give some examples?
- Did you have any difficulty in following the classes?
  - If yes, what kind of difficulties did you have?
- Do you think that this new model can be applied to all prep school students?
  - If no, why it cannot be applied?
- Did you have any academic success problem because of this new classroom model?
  - If yes, what problem did you have?

The data of the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively. In the analyzing procedure, the percentages of the online questionnaire were used and the data of the interviews were analyzed qualitatively. Each interview was recorded via voice recorder software and then all the files were saved on both a computer and cloud system. As the next step, the files were transcribed to reach the themes and main themes. For each interview a table (See Table 1) that has 3 columns were created. The transcribed codes were transferred to the table. The codes were examined by 3 different researchers and then the themes were drained to the last column. The same procedure was applied to the themes and by this way the main themes were drained to a different table (See Table2).

Table1.

Individual Interviews Analyze Table

Questions	Codes	Themes
Q1		
Q1a		
Q2		
Q2a		
Q3		
Q3a		
Q4		
Q4a		
Q5		
Q5a		

Table2.

Individual Interviews Main Theme Table

Questions	Themes	Main Themes
Q1		
Q1a		
Q2		
Q2a		
Q3		
Q3a		
Q4		
Q4a		
Q5		
Q5a		

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. Findings of the questionnaire

The questionnaire shows that most of the students (96 %) believe Flipped classroom model;

- is more flexible than traditional classroom,
- can be applied to all prep schools,
- one week is enough to complete the online session,
- makes the classes more interesting because of being ubiquitous (anywhere anytime),
- using open sources like youtube makes them understand better,
- must be rehearsed by pilot classes ,
- provides better feedback,
- addresses different learning styles,
- enables peer learning,
- statistics motivates them in terms of class participation,
- makes them revise better especially before quizzes or exams,
- makes them reach to all classes thanks to class records,
- makes them get significantly better grades than the previous semester,
- enable them to reach their lecturer after school

### 3.2. Findings of individual interviews

Q1 : Do you think that this new model of learning is more advantageous than the old one?

Q1a : If yes, what kind of advantages does it have ? (100 % yes)

When this question addressed to the students, all of them answered “yes” and they added that flipped classroom makes some advantages like:

- Economic advantages
- Using time more efficiently
- Peer learning
- No missing classes
- More helpful before exams
- Fun ( doing other than working on coursebook)
- Collaborative
- Reaching the lecturer after school

Q2 : Did you feel that you learned better?

Q2a : If yes, can you give some examples?

The students expressed that they feel better in terms of scores, class performance, feedback, and outcome. Also most of the students added that “Listening my own voice makes better pronunciation”.

Q3 : Did you have any difficulty in following the classes?

Q3a : If yes, what kind of difficulties did you have ?

Only one student expressed that he experienced some technological problems and connection problems because of the conditions at the dorm that they are staying. In addition to this, most of the students expressed that their friends out of their class also wanted to attend the online classes so this situation got some problems for them.

Q4 : Do you think that this new model can be applied to all prep school students?

Q4a : If no, why it cannot be applied?

Only two of the students were expressed their concerns about possible problems like:

- What happens if 1000 students connect at the same time?
- Everybody does not have internet access ( for example in KYK)

They also conclude that before starting a model like this these conditions must be handled by the school board.

Q5 : Did you have any academic success problem because of this new classroom model?

Q5a : If yes, what problem did you have?



No students answered “yes” to this question. Moreover, they all agree that this model is helpful in their school performance and they also added that after prep school they can go on studying English if university administration let them.

#### 4. Results

The results indicated that using a flipped EFL model is more effective than a traditional EFL class to improve the English level. In addition, the students were asked to express their feelings about language learning by individual interviews. Moreover, all of the students expressed that having no obligations and limitations made them focus on their topic more effectively and by this way they could study English whenever and wherever they wanted. They also added that this way made an economical contribution to them because of having time to work part-time and no payment for school shuttle. Lastly, the study reveals that before the exams, especially the important ones, the students revised the classes more than ten times in order to understand the topic better. To sum up, this study revealed that flipping a prep school class can boost students' academic success, their motivation and also can contribute to their economic situation.

#### 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Most of the prep schools in Turkey have traditional classroom models which includes 4 to 6 hours face to face class each day of a week. Moreover, these prep schools have a very tight schedule that is hard to keep up for the students. These kind of harsh conditions make the students demotivated and therefore they give up studying or they just want to attend the classes because of attendance issues. This situation makes traditional classrooms full of physically here but mentally there students. However, when you offer them more flexible conditions, they find easier to keep up with the education.

So, a flipped model of EFL classroom which is set up by the instructors and the students can make the students more motivated. By this way, more motivated students will start to enjoy their class and in turn this would make them get the input better. As a result of this better input, better scores and better outcomes can be gained. To sum up, more interactive curriculums can be more beneficial for the students. Also, mobile learning has an incredible potential for learning English. If this potential is used in a correct way, it is possible to get the learning out of class and school. Therefore, learning will be ubiquitous (anywhere, anytime).

Lastly, this study has some implications mentioned below;

- More blended curriculums can be offered
- Open Educational Sources can be included to curriculums
- More interactive activities can boost school performance
- Out of school activities motivate students
- Mobile technology is so common
- Government dormitories need to provide internet access
- Flexible class hours can contribute to school performance
- Learning on your own is more valuable
- Language labs are old-fashioned but can be used as an alternative to students having connection problems
- Peer-learning can be used more effectively thanks to flipped class
- Online classes can be designed for prep school graduates

#### References

- Academy, H. E. (2017). Transforming teaching inspiring learning. heacademy: derived from <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/> adresinden alınmıştır
- Gerstein, J. (2011, Haziran 13). The flipped classroom model: a full picture. user generated education: derived from <https://usergeneratededucation.wordpress.com/2011/06/13/the-flipped-classroom-model-a-full-picture/>



Nebil, F. S. (2016, Ocak 11). FATİH projesinde neredeyiz. T24: derived from <http://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/fusun-sarp-nebil/2016-basinda-fatih-projesinde-neredeyiz,13640>  
Partnership, G. S. (2013, Ağustos 29). The glossary of education reform. edglossary: derived from <https://www.edglossary.org/blended-learning/>

## Appendix 1

Bu bölümde Ters Yüz Edilmiş Öğrenme yoluyla Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce eğitimi modelinin değerlendirilmesiyle ilgili ifadeler bulunmaktadır. Gerçekleştirdiğiniz dersler kapsamında, Harmanlanmış İngilizce eğitim modeli ilgili görüşünüzü en uygun seçeneği (X) işaretleyerek belirtiniz. Kutucuklara ilişkin rakamlar şu anlama gelmektedir.

1=Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum 2=Katılmıyorum 3=Kararsızım 4=Katılıyorum 5=Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

	İfadeler	Katılma Düzeyiniz				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Modelin yapısı öğrenenin ihtiyacına göre uyarlanabilir bir yapıdaydı					
2	Model hazırlık okulunda ki diğer sınıflara da uygulanabilir					
3	Eş-zamanlı derslerin tamamlanması için verilen süre yeterliydi					
4	Derslerin bilgisayar ya da telefondan takip edilebilmesi ilgimi arttırdı					
5	Derslere katılırken ya da izlerken açık kaynaklara (youtube, bloglar v.b) erişebilmem dersi daha iyi anlamamı sağladı					
6	Eş-zamanlı derslere başlamadan önce deneme dersleri yapılması sistemi daha iyi kullanmamı sağladı					
7	Bu model sayesinde daha etkili geri bildirim alabildim					
8	Bu model farklı öğrenme biçimlerine hitap ediyor					
9	İstedğim zaman dersi izleyebilmem beni çok rahatlatdı					
10	Bu model sayesinde arkadaşlarımdan da çok şey öğrendim					
11	Ders takip istatistiklerini öğrenmem dersleri takibimi arttırdı					
12	Özellikle sınavlardan önce dersi tekrar izleyebilmem çok faydalı oldu					
13	Modelin karma tasarım (çevrimiçi ve yüz yüze) olması çok faydalı oldu					
14	Derslerin çevrimiçi erişebilir olması ders kaçırmamamı sağladı					
15	İkinci dönem notlarımda gözle görülür bir artış oldu					