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## FLIPPED LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

### Abstract

Teaching and learning a foreign language has changed a lot during history. In 1950s, grammar teaching was popular and students were not given importance in the classroom. Their feelings and thoughts were not taken into consideration. However, there has been many changes in educational field. In recent years, there has been an improvement in the usage of technology and as a result a new term called “flipped learning” has been very popular. It is a type of method that requires a change in teaching types. In a traditional language classroom, students were not active, just sitting in the classroom and listening silently and passively. However, with the advent of new methods, in classroom, teacher is teaching the topics and do the exercises in the classroom. Students are active in this procedure.

**Key words:** flipped learning, method, technology, foreign language teaching

## YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETİMİNDE TERS YÜZ EDİLMİŞ ÖĞRENME

### Özet

Bir yabancı dili öğretmek ve öğrenmek, tarih boyunca çok değişti. 1950'lerde, gramer öğretimi popülerdi ve öğrencilere sınıfta önem verilmedi. Duygu ve düşünceleri dikkate alınmadı. Bununla birlikte, eğitim alanında birçok değişiklik olmuştur. Son yıllarda, teknolojinin kullanımında bir gelişme kaydedildi ve sonuç olarak "ters yüz öğrenme" adı verilen yeni bir terim çok popüler oldu. Öğretim türlerinde bir değişiklik gerektiren bir yöntem türüdür. Geleneksel bir dil sınıfında, öğrenciler aktif değildi, sadece sınıfta oturup sessizce ve pasif olarak dinliyorlardı. Ama yeni yöntemlerin ortaya çıkışı ile birlikte, sınıfta öğretmen konuları öğretmekte ve alıştırmaları yapmaktadır. Öğrenciler bu süreçte aktiftir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** ters yüz öğrenme, yöntem, teknoloji, yabancı dil öğretimi

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning a foreign language has changed a lot during history. In 1950s, grammar teaching was popular and students were not given importance in the classroom. Their feelings and thoughts were not taken into consideration. Büyükkarcı (2009; p. 313) stated

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*Traditional learning environments (for example, grammar translation and audiolingual) are those where the language is taught to a group of foreign or second language learners. In such cases, the focus is on the language itself, rather than on the information carried out by the language or the way it is processed and used. The teacher's aim is to assure that students learn the new vocabulary and grammatical rules of the new language.*

However, there has been many changes in in educational field. Yılmaz indicated that “Language teaching procedure has improvements and changes as a result of years of experiences, technological advances and increasing requirements” (2016; p. 7). With these new trends, improvements and methods, there have been many changes in language classrooms. As Durak Üğüten and Balcı stated (2017; p. 254),

*with the advent of new technology and new approaches, there has been a need for a new trend and change in the field of second/foreign language teaching and learning. The main focus has become the learners and providing them a relaxed, motivating and enjoyable learning atmosphere.*

Learners are active in the classrooms and free to say their thoughts and feelings. It does not mean that teachers are passive. Teachers are still active and ready to cooperate with the students. Grammar is not the main focus. Students are the main focus (Durak Üğüten, 2015).

Teaching and learning a foreign language is not an easy task both for the teacher and for the students. As Bulut and Durak indicated:

*teaching is really hard work as it requires many skills, thinking, and decision making. It is like a work of art, not a job anybody can do. Teachers should bear in mind that learning is not a product or an outcome. In fact, it is an active process, which involves evaluating the learning experiences and receiving and constructing knowledge. It is the learners' responsibility to learn; s/he can choose to learn, and what, when, why to learn” (2003; p. 91).*

Teaching also requires being aware of learner and learning style differences as they affect the success in language classrooms. According to Balcı, “it is admitted that students' individual differences have an important effect on the success and performance of foreign/second language classrooms” (2016; p.118).

Teachers should not forget that nobody in the classroom has equal learning styles and pace. Active learning is in progress and the number of autonomous learners are increasing. Individuals being active and their learning by the help of using their experiences are the two main principles of constructivist theory (Durak Üğüten, 2016; p.107).

In recent years, there has been an improvement in the usage of technology and as a result a new term called “flipped learning” has been very popular. It is a type of method that requires a change in teaching types. In a traditional language classroom, students were not active, just sitting in the classroom and listening silently and passively. However, with the advent of new methods, in classroom, teacher is teaching the topics and do the exercises in the classroom. Students are active in this procedure.

## WHAT IS FLIPPED LEARNING ?

There are many studies about flipped learning. According to Arnold-Garza (2014: p. 1) the flipped classroom is “ a teaching method that delivers lecture content to students at home through electronic means and uses class time for practical application activities, may be useful for information literacy instruction”. In flipped classrooms, there is not a classical order which requires teacher’s teaching the topic in the classroom. Teacher records the lessons and students watch them wherever they want. So technology use is a must. Başal (2015:p. 1) described this model as follows:

*students watch instructional videos outside the classroom and do assignments or engage in activities inside the classroom. Language teachers are one group of ducators exploring the flipped classroom. In foreign language classes, such an approach may offer great benefits for both the teachers and students since classroom time can be applied to more interactive tasks.*

Another definition came from Ouda and Ahmed. They indicated that “It is called the flipped class model because the whole classroom/homework paradigm is "flipped". In its simplest terms, what used to be classwork (the lecture) is done at home through teacher-created videos and what used to be homework (assigned problems) is now done in class (2016; p. 418).”

Bermann & Sams (in Nicolosi, 2012: p.13) defined flipped learning as a model that “happens when the teacher’s lecture is delivered to students via video outside of the classroom. Then traditional class time is used for active problem solving and done-to-one or small group tutoring with the teacher”. So, students are in the classroom ready to join the activities as they watch the videos at home.

## FOUR PILLARS OF FLIPPED LEARNING

Flipped learning has four pillars:

- flexible environment
- learning culture
- intentional content
- professional educators.

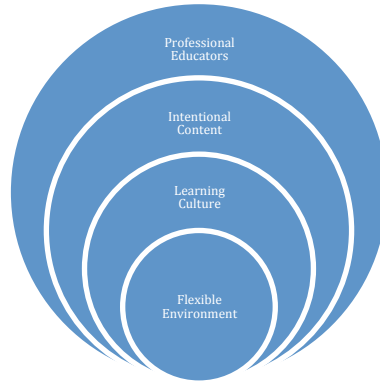


Figure I. Four Pillars of Flipped Learning

1. Flexible Environment: Teachers are not forced to record in a specific place. They are free to choose the recording place and time. In the same way, students decide on the place and time of their watching the videos.

2. Learning Culture: Instead of traditional teaching methods, learner-centered classrooms are popular. They are no more passive in the classroom.

3. Intentional Content: Teacher decides on the content of the recordings. Chang (2016: p.5) indicated that:

*in my flipped classroom, a variety of materials are available for students in different formats: textbook, PowerPoint slides, video clips, practice tests, and discussion forum. Students explore the basic concepts on their own before the class by reading the textbook and PowerPoint slides, and watching video clips. I design individual and group tasks for students to apply the concepts in real life scenarios.*

4. Professional Educators: There is a misunderstanding that as students come to the classroom after they watch the videos, teachers are not needed in the classroom. However, this is not the case. They are in the classroom to make more exercises and to answer the students' questions related to the topics.

#### **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FLIPPED LEARNING**

Being flexible is the most important advantage of flipped learning. Students watch the videos at home or wherever and whenever they want. They can watch again when they want. As they decide everything by themselves, autonomous learning is promoted.

However, there are some disadvantages. First, learner differences should be kept in mind. Balcı stated that "individual differences have been a remarkable point in language learning as in the other fields of education (2017: p. 1). One can learn fast but the other cannot. So teachers should be prepared to overcome these differences. Second, not all the students have equal technological equipment. So they cannot watch the videos if they do not have computers or internet connection.

#### **FLIPPED LEARNING STUDIES**

There have been many studies related to the effects of flipped classrooms in foreign language classrooms. Compton (2016) had a study at MEF University to evaluate the attitudes that MEF University English Language Preparatory Program (ELPP) teachers and students have toward Flipped Learning. According to the results of the study, if pedagogical assumptions of Flipped Learning will be accepted there should be some values to be discussed and some behaviors to be developed.

Basal had a study in 2015 with 47 prospective English language teachers at a state university in Turkey on flipped classrooms. He wanted to identify the perceptions of these teachers about flipped learning. As a result, it was clear that these teachers had positive perceptions.

Durak Ügüten and Balcı (2017) had a study in literature review model and gave detailed information about what flipped learning is, how it can be implemented in language classrooms, advantages and disadvantages of implementing it and related studies about flipped learning.

## CONCLUSION

Depending on the literature, traditional methods give importance to grammar rather than communication. However, as Yücel (2016) stated:

*There is no point in claiming that foreign language knowledge without having the capacity to speak makes sense in interpersonal communication. One of the underlying causes of the students' inability to show themselves in other skills except for grammar is that teachers do not give or cannot give chance to the students to express themselves during course time (p.18).*

Another comment comes from Durak Ügüten and Şanal (2016) who express the importance of four skills as a whole in language teaching procedure. They indicated that:

*The studies related to language teaching have revealed that we should see language as a whole and teach all the skills. It can not be thought apart from the other skills As the goal to teach the four skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing- is student's communicating comfortably, it cannot be thought apart from each other. Unfortunately, many programs do not emphasize the interest and importance of speaking and listening while emphasizing grammar, reading and writing.*

So there has been many new methods to promote communication and autonomous learners. One of these methods is called flipped learning which promotes constructivism and learner autonomy. Students decide on everything related to their learning procedure by themselves. So this is an important step on the way of being autonomous. Teachers are free to choose the content of the videos and time and place of the recordings. So they feel relaxed. To sum up, its advantageous to flip the classes both for the teachers and students.

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## GENİŞ ÖZET

Bir yabancı dili öğretmek ve öğrenmek, tarih boyunca çok değişti. 1950'lerde, gramer öğretimi popülerdi ve öğrencilere sınıfta önem verilmedi. Duygu ve düşünceleri dikkate alınmadı. Bununla birlikte, eğitim alanında birçok değişiklik olmuştur. Son yıllarda, iletişim ve özerk öğrenci kavramını önemseyen birçok yöntem ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca teknolojinin kullanımında da kayda değer bir ilerleme vardır ve bu da birçok yeni yöntemin ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur.

Bu metodlardan bir tanesi de yapısalcılığı ve özerk öğrenci fikirlerini destekleyen "ters yüz öğrenme" adı verilen yeni bir terimdir. Öğretim türlerinde bir değişiklik gerektiren bir yöntem türüdür. Geleneksel bir dil sınıfında, öğrenciler aktif değildi, sadece sınıfta oturup sessizce ve pasif olarak dinliyorlardı. Ama yeni yöntemlerin ortaya çıkışı ile birlikte, sınıfta öğretmen konuları öğretmekte ve alıştırmaları yapmaktadır. Öğrenciler bu süreçte aktiftir.

Özerk öğrenci olma yolunda önemli bir adımdır. Öğretmenler kayıt yapacakları yeri, zamanı ve kayıt konusu hakkında karar vermede özgürdürler. Böylece rahat hissederler. Öğrenciler için de durum aynıdır. Kayıtları nerede, ne zaman ve kaç kez izleyeceklerine kendileri karar verebiliyorlar. Kısaca hem öğretmen hem de öğrenci için avantajlı bir durumdur.