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Challenges and Perceptions of EFL Teachers in Indonesia towards the Implementation of the Flipped Classroom Model

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Abstract. The demands of communicative competence in English as a foreign language (EFL) education and the transition to an Independent Curriculum in Indonesia have encouraged the adoption of the flipped classroom model. Although theoretically this model is capable of improving students' autonomy and linguistic skills, there is a significant discrepancy between conceptual excellence and the reality of implementation in the field. This study aims to examine the real experiences and practical challenges faced by EFL educators in applying the flipped classroom model. Using a descriptive qualitative design, this study involved three experienced EFL teachers representing the junior high school, high school, and tertiary education levels. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Thematic Analysis (TA). The results of the study identified four main challenge dimensions: (1) the surge in workload that forces teachers to transform into multimedia producers; (2) low autonomy and self-regulation of students in the asynchronous phase before classes start; (3) shifting dynamics of classroom interaction that demand the use of digital interventions; and (4) the emergence of emotional distance that drains the socio-emotional energy of educators. This study concludes that the sustainability of the flipped classroom model cannot rely on curriculum changes alone, but requires concrete institutional investment in the provision of digital infrastructure and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) training to prevent professional burnout in teachers.

Keywords: *Flipped Classroom, EFL Teacher Perception, Implementation Challenges, TPACK, Learning Independence*

Introduction

The current demand for communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education has obliged and encouraged educators to continuously seek relevant pedagogical innovations (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020; Putri & Nurkhamidah, 2023; Val & Quintas, 2025). Although active student engagement is crucial for language acquisition, traditional teacher-centered lecture methods often fail to maintain student attention or provide sufficient space for meaningful interactions. In response, the flipped classroom model has emerged as a highly considered alternative. This approach shifts live instruction, encompassing reading assignments and instructional videos, to a self-directed (asynchronous) learning setting at home. Consequently, class time on the subsequent day is dedicated to collaborative exercises, in-depth discussions, and higher-order cognitive activities (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Sehrish Sarfaraz et al., 2025).

Conceptually, this inverted learning model aligns with the objectives of 21st-century education and recent curriculum reforms in Indonesia, particularly the transition to an

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Independent Curriculum that necessitates a definitive shift towards student-centered, differentiated learning (González-pérez & Ramírez-montoya, 2022; Yuan et al., 2022). Prior research indicates that the use of flipped classrooms can improve learning autonomy, strengthen essential linguistic competencies such as grammar and fluency, and alleviate students' language anxiety(Apriani et al., 2021; Afzali & Izadpanah, 2021; Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020). However, there remains a significant gap between these theoretical benefits and the real challenges of implementation. The effectiveness of these interventions depends primarily on the micro-dynamics within the classroom and the teacher's capacity to implement them (Rafi & Morgan, 2024; Shapira et al., 2026).

Observations in Indonesian educational settings indicate that adopting a flipped classroom model requires significant technological competence and creative investment before the start of face-to-face learning. In addition, the effectiveness of the asynchronous phase before classes begin is often hampered by students' low self-regulation and digital access discrepancies, which risks turning promising instructional designs into mere administrative burdens (Bylieva et al., 2021; Cheraghi & Rahimi, 2024; J. Han et al., 2023).

To address this discrepancy in research, this study aims to examine the real experiences and practical challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers when using the flipped classroom approach (Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020; Zhang & Fang, 2022). By synthesizing perspectives from the junior high school, high school, and college levels, this research seeks to dissect the systemic and practical realities of this pedagogical transition. The study attempts to clarify the appropriate conditions for the sustainability of instructional improvements, particularly during the independent preparation phase before class, ensuring optimal outcomes in the subject.

Theoretical Framework

The Flipped Classroom Model in EFL Contexts

The flipped classroom model has become a major focus in modern educational innovations, particularly in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). Conceptually, this model reverses the conventional instructional sequence by moving the delivery of basic material (such as grammar explanations) outside of school hours through digital media (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). This change provides students with additional space to do activities that are focused on them, like working together to solve problems and practicing language in context (Yuan et al., 2022).

In the context of EFL, studies indicate that this strategy enhances student autonomy while reinforcing fundamental linguistic skills, such as grammar and fluency (Ningrum & Toyyibah, 2024; Tsai, 2021). By processing complex linguistic inputs according to their respective learning pace before class starts, students can lower their language anxiety levels (affective filter). This creates a safer classroom atmosphere for students to dare to produce language orally during face-to-face sessions (Yuan et al., 2022). The Indonesian Merdeka curriculum's focus on student adaptability and active participation aligns well with this dynamic (Fathurrochman et al., 2025; Nurdiyanti et al., 2024).

Dimensions of Flipped Learning Implementation

Despite having empirically supported educational benefits, the transition to this reverse mode is often hampered by structural and operational barriers. Research shows that the focus on the subjective experience of EFL teachers is still very limited, especially in non-Western contexts such as Indonesia (Putra, 2024). Understanding teachers' perspectives is essential in the post-pandemic era, where educators bear a great cognitive and emotional burden in adapting to the complexity of the demands of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) (Howard et al., 2021; Irawati et al., 2021). Based on the literature, the success of the implementation of this model is determined by several key intersecting dimensions:

Technological Competence and Teacher Workload

The success of flipped learning is highly dependent on reliable digital infrastructure; however, the main obstacle is not just the availability of hardware, but the stability of internet connections that are often uneven in various regions (Hunaepi & Suharta, 2024; Apriani et al., 2021). This phenomenon of the digital divide causes students from low-income backgrounds to have difficulty completing self-preparation assignments, which ultimately undermines the flow of collaborative activities in the classroom (Kormos & Wisdom, 2023).

On the other hand, this model requires educators to act as instructional designers as well as multimedia producers, from scripting to editing learning videos (Verawati & Nisrina, 2025). This additional workload, if not accompanied by institutional support and reduced administrative burden, can trigger burnout or professional burnout (Dursun & Aykan, 2025). Therefore, continuous professional training regarding creative media production is necessary to increase teachers' confidence (Kumar et al., 2021).

Student Readiness and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

Another crucial determining factor is the capacity of students in self-regulated learning. The main barriers in a flipped classroom are often rooted in students' low ability to manage time and a lack of intrinsic motivation to learn outside of the teacher's supervision (Alonso et al., 2023; Pilu et al., 2025). In an educational culture that has become accustomed to teacher-centered methods, the shift towards self-learning requires significant cultural adjustments (Budianto & Mason, 2021; Hasbullah, 2022; Hunaepi & Suharta, 2024). Without strong guidance and constant monitoring from teachers, the transition to being an active learner will be difficult to achieve to the fullest.

Dynamics of Classroom Interactions

The flipped learning model radically changes the nature of classroom interactions, where conventional teaching approaches have proven less effective (Paul et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2023). Face-to-face interactions are no longer the main way knowledge is shared. Instead, they are used for short interventions and interactive digital tools that encourage students to respond spontaneously (Agyeman & Aphane, 2024). This shift toward high-frequency interactions is strongly supported by the argument that active formative assessment and data-driven classroom management are crucial for maintaining cognitive engagement in collaborative spaces (Martín-Sómer et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2025).

Pedagogical Relationships and Socio-Emotional Challenges

Because initial knowledge transfer via asynchronous video is depersonalized, educators must devote more socio-emotional energy during limited face-to-face sessions to assess student understanding and rebuild relationships(Michael et al., 2023; Sindiani et al., 2025). Adapting to this new communication modality consumes significant social energy, which can ultimately lead to stress and Zoom fatigue in teachers (Bailenson, 2021; Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). Many educators perceive the lack of intimate personal contact during the initial learning phase as a significant barrier to building the crucial relationships needed for successful language learning (Simon et al., 2022).

Material and Method

To understand the main phenomenon, purposive sampling was used to select participants in this qualitative descriptive study. This sampling strategy was used intentionally to select individuals best able to help understand the problem being studied(Creswell & D., 2023). In this study, the participants were three EFL educators with 10 to 17 years of teaching experience who actively implemented the flipped classroom model. These individuals were selected based on their demographics, teaching experience, and active involvement in professional development (e.g., Merdeka Belajar, graduate studies, and literacy communities). To ensure contextual depth, they represented middle school, high school, and university settings, and pseudonyms (P1, P2, P3) were used to maintain confidentiality. Table 1 below shows all their demographic data:

Table 1.
Demographic characteristics of the participants

Participants	Gen	Age	Teaching Experience	Competence	Grades	Self-Enhancement
P1	M	32	10 years	English Teacher	9th	Merdeka Belajar
P2	F	40	15 years	English Teacher	11th & 12th	Master student, Merdeka Belajar
P3	F	46	17 years	Lecturer	Undergraduate	PhD Student, Literacy community

From Table 1 above, it is explained that Participant 1 (P1) is a 32-year-old male English teacher with a decade of experience at the junior high school level. He teaches ninth graders and has hands-on experience with the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Participant 2 (P2) is a 40-year-old woman who has taught English for 15 years at the high school level (grades 11 and 12). She is studying to gain a master's degree to improve her skills while using the Merdeka Belajar method in her classroom. Participant 3 (P3) is a 46-year-old woman who has been teaching for 17 years. She began her career in the high school classroom, where she excelled for many years. Eventually, she switched to teaching students, where he actively implemented the flipped classroom learning style. Demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable academic growth, she is also pursuing a PhD and is involved in the literacy community. Collectively, these educators represent a broad spectrum of EFL contexts in Indonesia, from junior high school to tertiary education. Their diverse institutional backgrounds and professional development paths provide rich and varied insights into the challenges and perceptions of EFL teaching professionals, who are broadly defined as 'teachers' in this study, regarding the implementation of the flipped classroom model.

Semi-structured interviews and demographic questionnaires were used to collect data in this study. Semi-structured interviews are used to gather in-depth information about how educators implement flipped classrooms and the challenges they face. The interview protocol was developed based on four indicators: (1) workload, (2) student autonomy, (3) classroom interaction, and (4) pedagogical relationships. This instrument is essential for achieving a research context because it allows individuals to express their ideas and insights in a conversational yet directed way (Leech, 2002). After that, a 10-item demographic questionnaire was used to provide contextual background for each participant. Before the data collection phase, each instrument is checked by a group of experts to make sure they are accurate and of good quality (Jacob & Furgerson, 2015).

To interpret the collected data in detail, this study follows a six-step thematic analysis (TA)(Braun & Clarke, 2021). The procedure consists of familiarizing themselves with the

data through word-for-word transcripts, writing initial code, looking for themes, reviewing themes, defining and identifying themes, and producing reports. The initial coding process uses an inductive approach, highlighting specific areas such as instructional limitations and teaching methods. These codes are then organized into more general groups based on topics such as "Workload," "Student Autonomy," "Classroom Interaction," and "Pedagogical Relationships." This methodical process facilitates a rigorous and genuine understanding of participants' lived experiences within the EFL context.

Results and Discussion

Results

This section presents research findings on the challenges and perceptions of English teachers (EFL) in Indonesia towards the implementation of the flipped classroom model. Data obtained through in-depth interviews showed that despite the differences in teaching levels (junior high school, high school, and university), the three participants faced similar obstacles. Thematic analysis of the interview results identified four main aspects that emerged consistently in all participants. The findings are presented in the following Table 2:

Table 2.
EFL Educators' Perception of Flipped Classroom Implementation

No	Aspect	P1	P2	P3
1	Workload			
2	Student Autonomy			
3	Classroom Interaction			
4	Pedagogical Relationships			

This study identifies four main pillars that define the experience of EFL educators in implementing the flipped classroom model. These findings reflect the dynamics of the transition from an asynchronous phase at home to a synchronous phase at school the next day. An in-depth explanation of each aspect based on the results of the interview transcript is presented as follows:

Workload

The implementation of this model requires educators to go beyond their traditional roles, forcing them to assume dual responsibilities as learning designers and multimedia producers. While this creates a significant increase in workload, there is a natural process of improving digital literacy. P2 describes the intensity of the time it takes to produce quality material before the in-person session begins:

> *"The process of creating a video using Camtasia... Incredibly, it can take two days or more. Starting from creating scripts, recording videos many times due to mispronunciation, to editing. Not to mention if the files are corrupted."* (P2, Lines: 83-86).

Participants who have to balance teaching with the technical demands of post-production are at a higher risk of professional burnout. P1 recognizes that new employment will result in a lot of mental stress on him or her:

> *"I always feel really exhausted after spending hours making one digital thing... We were teachers, but now we have to be film editors without any training"* (P1, Line: 91–93).

This increase in effort may contribute to professional burnout, yet it has naturally improved instructors' digital skills in creating permanent learning resources.

Student Autonomy

An important challenge in the home-based learning phase is the low self-regulation of students without the physical presence of teachers, which often results in decreased cognitive focus. However, technology provides an opportunity for educators to monitor student readiness more appropriately through a Learning Management System (LMS) before a physical classroom session. P1 highlights students' cognitive focus problems:

> *"Although they (the students) are supposed to have independent access to resources (at home), their concentration can be disrupted. For example, one of them explained that it was caused by signal interference, but I noticed they opened another tab on their screen. If you don't keep an eye on them, their concentration can be seriously impaired."* (P1, Line: 35-37).

Even with these constraints, the reverse learning approach has a solution in Data-Driven Instruction. Digital trails may now automatically verify if another student is ready because every student can access statistics, so teachers can set learning guidance priorities:

> "*I don't have to ask each person one at a time, 'Have you read?'" I just need to open the system before going to school. I already know who hasn't opened the material at all. So when I go to class, I can immediately pay more attention to students whose data shows they are not ready."* (P1, Line: 48-50).

This is supported by the use of dashboards, which serve as indicators of real engagement, not just technical presence.

Classroom Interaction

When teachers come to face-to-face sessions at school, they change how they teach from just giving knowledge to helping students have active discussions with the help of interactive tools. Using platforms like Mentimeter and Jamboard has been a good way to get students who generally don't participate to do so:

> *"I can get quick responses from students with tools like Mentimeter and Jamboard, which keep them more interested*. (P3, Lines: 53-56).

These findings indicate the concept of Digital Inclusivity, wherein virtual environments within physical classrooms offer a sense of security for introverted learners to express what they think without the intimidation of social pressure.

> *"There is an interesting phenomenon... students who are usually in offline classes are very quiet, eh, when they use Jamboard or Mentimeter... They become active in giving their opinions... This technology actually gives a voice to those who would normally be 'drowning'."* (P3, Line: 58-60).

The use of technology in these sessions not only increases engagement but also creates digital inclusivity that provides a safe space for quiet students to participate.

Pedagogical Relationships

The last aspect highlights the socio-emotional dimension in which self-paced learning patterns create a dilemma between teaching efficiency and the emergence of emotional distance. Self-study patterns at home can create a feeling of "emotional distance" for

educators (P2, Lines 95-97). However, the model's self-paced learning features make it possible to accommodate the different cognitive abilities of students. P2 notes that digital materials provide opportunities for more in-depth learning, stating:

> *"On the positive side, the videos I have worked so hard to make can be replayed with students at home. A student who is a bit slow to understand can watch 3 to 4 times until he understands, before meeting me at school the next day. So when they are in class, they already have 'capital' for discussion."* (P2, Lines: 88-91).

Despite the reduced physical proximity during the initial learning phase, this model offers pedagogical justice through self-paced learning that allows students to learn better.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the use of flipped classrooms in the realm of EFL requires an extensive shift in educational approaches, accompanied by significant technological and professional challenges. Based on the thematic findings, the discourse on these issues and perceptions is categorized into four principal dimensions: workload, student autonomy, classroom interaction, and pedagogical relationships.

First, regarding workload, participants reported significant fatigue not only from lesson delivery but also from post-production demands that were not seen in the creation of digital materials. Turning traditional EFL speaking or grammar exercises into asynchronous reverse material requires intensive video editing, such as scripting, cutting, and rendering using software like Camtasia (Alyoussef, 2022; S. Han, 2022) . The sudden need for teachers to act as amateur multimedia producers creates a heavy cognitive burden, echoing concerns about the urgent need for increased TPACK training (Baidoo-Anu & Owusu Ansah, 2023). Although educators have implemented modifications to their curricula, they acknowledge that technology challenges extend beyond inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate internet connectivity (Buabeng & Amo-Darko, 2025; Ndibalema, 2022). Research shows that the increase in professional demands on teachers is basically related to the inherent complexity in implementing Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) (Ait Ali et al., 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024).

Second, the success of the flipped learning model is significantly hampered by student autonomy issues during the asynchronous learning phase at home. The shift from physical behavior monitoring to digital workflow control is in line with recent studies showing that digital learners need different strategies to maintain concentration during the learning process (Akila et al., 2024; Kumari & Maity, 2025; Mhlongo et al., 2023; Vy et al., 2025). Participants' difficulties in concentrating at home indicate broader systemic problems related to students' self-regulation and time management skills (Hadwin et al., 2025). This barrier is particularly prominent in education reform in Indonesia, where the transition from a passive model centered on a teacher to an active approach centered on a student presents considerable obstacles (Yuan et al., 2022). To manage this phase, the increased reliance on platform log data as a proxy for engagement is in line with global trends in Learning Analytics, where real-time behavioral monitoring occurs to adjust the pace of teaching (Preuveneers et al., 2021; Val & Quintas, 2025).

Third, the nature of interaction in the classroom is undergoing a significant transformation. Results show that extended conventional teaching approaches are less effective in reverse classroom settings (Paul et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2023). The educators in this study observed increased student engagement during physical face-to-face sessions using interactive micro-interventions and digital tools that encouraged impulsive responses (Agyeman & Aphane, 2024). This shift towards dynamic and high-frequency interactions is supported by the argument that active formative assessment and data-driven management are essential for maintaining cognitive engagement in collaborative spaces(Martín-Sómer et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2025).

Finally, the social-emotional dimension of the inverted learning model presents unique challenges for pedagogical relationships. Because initial knowledge transfer through asynchronous video is *depersona*lized, educators must expend much greater social-emotional energy during limited physical classroom sessions to gauge student understanding and rebuild rapport (Michael et al., 2023; Sindiani et al., 2025). This is in line with the findings that adapting to new communication modalities consumes greater social energy, which ultimately leads to deep professional burnout and increased stress levels (Bailenson, 2021; Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). Some educators consider the lack of close and sustained personal contact during the early learning phase to be a significant barrier to building the crucial relationships needed for language learning (Simon et al., 2022; Yan & Wang, 2022).

EFL teachers argue that flipped classrooms are a great way to promote student-centered learning, but this method is not as effective as it could be due to a lack of support from their schools (H. Han et al., 2024; Pilu et al., 2025). Teachers still have too much work to do if they don't have the right infrastructure and skills in media production. People typically know what the inverted class paradigm is for, but for it to work well in everyday life, institutions need to be committed to making things easier for professionals and increasing their technical skills (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021; Zain, 2022).

Conclusion

The implementation of the flipped classroom model in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Indonesia represents a paradigm shift, transitioning educators from traditional classroom supervisors to digital workflow managers and multimedia producers. While this model successfully fosters student-centered learning through dynamic micro-interactions, its practical implementation is severely limited by systemic and professional challenges. This study concludes that the promising pedagogical benefits of the flipped classroom approach are often overshadowed by high levels of teacher burnout, caused by the demanding and time-consuming process of producing asynchronous digital materials

Specifically, the findings indicate that the model's effectiveness depends on navigating four interrelated realities. First, the transition demands a significant increase in workload and ongoing adaptation of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), which triggers cognitive fatigue among teachers. Second, the success of the asynchronous pre-class phase is severely hampered by low student self-regulation and the digital access gap, making data-driven monitoring through a Learning Management System (LMS) crucial. Third, this model radically changes classroom interactions; however, it positively introduces "digital inclusion," enabling passive learners to actively participate through interactive tools. Finally, this model presents unique socio-emotional challenges, requiring educators to exert significant social energy to bridge the emotional distance created during the self-paced learning phase, while also offering "pedagogical equity" to students who need more time to process material at home.

Therefore, for the flipped classroom model to be sustainable, educational institutions must go beyond simply mandating curriculum changes without providing concrete support. The success of this pedagogical transition depends entirely on institutional investment in a stable digital infrastructure and ongoing specialized training in creative media production. By providing institutional support to ease the technical and administrative burden on teachers, the flipped classroom model's full potential can be realized to create a more adaptive, inclusive, and modern EFL learning experience.

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