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(IJEPC)**www.ijepec.com**FLIPPED CLASSROOMS IN EFL LISTENING INSTRUCTION:
A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**Wei Lanlan¹, Noraini Said^{2*}, Ting Pick Dew³

¹ Faculty of Education and Sports Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia; Department of College English, Zhejiang Yuexiu University, Shaoxing, China
Email: 1992712645@qq.com

² Faculty of Education and Sports Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia
Email: noraini.said@ums.edu.my

³ Faculty of Education and Sports Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia
Email: t.elaine@ums.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

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DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.1061065This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

This study presents a systematic review of empirical studies on the flipped classroom (FC) approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listening instruction, with the goal of identifying current research trends, instructional activities, and the reported benefits and challenges. Following the PSALSAR framework and PRISMA guidelines, 34 empirical studies published between 2012 and October 2025 were identified from Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC databases. The findings reveal that research on flipped EFL listening instruction has grown steadily since 2019, peaking in 2022. Most studies were conducted in developing countries such as Iran, Indonesia and Egypt, with undergraduate students as participants. Quasi-experimental or mixed-methods designs were predominantly employed in these studies. The review also indicates that video watching, online exercises, and note-taking are among the most-reported pre-class activities, while group discussions, skill-based tasks, and collaborative learning are among the in-class activities. What's more, key benefits of the flipped listening instruction such as improved listening comprehension, greater learner autonomy, and increased active learning have been most frequently reported. Reported challenges, on the other hand, include technical difficulties, increased student workload and need for teacher guidance. This paper provides practical guidance for policymakers, instructors, and learners seeking to optimize FC practices in EFL listening.

Keywords:

Flipped Classroom (FC), English as A Foreign Language (EFL), Listening Instruction, Systematic Review

Introduction

As an innovative, learner-centered approach, FC has received increasing attention over the past decade in the field of EFL education. Different from traditional lecture-based methods, this “inverted” model shifts initial exposure to course content outside the classroom, typically through digital resources such as video lectures, reading materials, or interactive online materials (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). By relocating the acquisition of foundational knowledge to the pre-class stage, instructors can dedicate more in-class time to collaborative tasks, problem-solving, and activities that promote higher-order thinking skills.

A large number of empirical studies has consistently shown that the FC approach has a positive impact on language skill development in EFL contexts. For example, Turan and Akdag-Cimen (2020) found in a systematic review of FC practices in English teaching that there is widespread evidence that this model can improve learning outcomes. Their analysis highlights the particular effectiveness of flipped learning environments in developing language productive skills, especially in speaking and writing. By focusing class time on collaborative, interactive, and communicative tasks, this flipped model enables learners to practice language output in a more meaningful context. This practical mechanism through active participation and immediate feedback is especially helpful to improve the fluency and accuracy of language output.

Fisher et al. (2024) further corroborated these findings in their systematic review of 40 empirical studies on flipped learning in EFL contexts in higher education. Their review shows significant improvements across various language skills: in speaking (e.g., Phoeun & Sengsri, 2021; Li & Zhou, 2021) and writing (e.g., Alghasab, 2020; Challob, 2021), as well as in listening (Abdelhalim, 2018; Amiryousefi, 2019) and reading (Wu et al., 2021). Research has also shown that flipped classrooms can effectively enhance learners’ motivation and engagement, which is crucial for successful language acquisition (e.g., Lee & Wallace, 2018).

Kong et al. (2024) conducted a study to examine how the FC approach affects the language skills of Chinese EFL learners. Through a systematic review of 233 articles published in Chinese academic journals between 2011 and 2021, their study found that this teaching model has generally received positive feedback in China, especially in improving learners’ writing and speaking skills. In contrast, research on listening and reading skills is still insufficient. Kong et al. pointed out that future research needs to further explore how to localize the FC model to more effectively support EFL instruction in the Chinese context. Overall, this review indicates that the FC model has significant potential in improving the English education quality in China.

Listening, as a core language skill, is often “overlooked”, “neglected”, or “taken for granted” (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021). It is widely believed that listening skills develop naturally through random language exposure, requiring no special guidance or training. This perception leads many educators and learners to underestimate the effort and professional guidance required to master this complex skill (Renandya & Widodo, 2020).

In China, traditional college English teaching struggles to engage students who grew up in a digital environment. Compared to passive lectures, students generally find highly interactive and technology-supported teaching methods more suitable for their learning needs and more effective (Kozanitis & Nenciovici, 2023). Pelletier et al. (2021) pointed out that post-pandemic education would rely more heavily on innovative teaching technologies. This trend underscores

the importance of adopting adaptive and engaging teaching methods in English language instruction.

While the FC approach has been widely employed in EFL teaching, there are still limited empirical studies focusing on its impact on the development of listening skill. Most existing studies have concentrated on productive skills such as speaking and writing (Qi et al., 2024), leaving listening—a foundational but challenging receptive skill—relatively underexplored. Given this gap, a systematic review is needed to synthesize current empirical evidence and to clarify how FC approach contributes to EFL learners' listening development. Therefore, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of the FC model in enhancing listening ability, thereby offering meaningful implications for policymakers, educators, and learners. Accordingly, this systematic review intends to explore the following three research questions:

1. What are the research trends of FC studies on EFL listening instruction?
2. In flipped EFL listening classrooms, what types of pre-class and in-class activities have been implemented? How are these activities designed?
3. What are the advantages and challenges of using the FC model in EFL listening instruction?

Methodology

A systematic literature review (SLR) approach was adopted in this study and the research process was guided by the PSALSAR framework proposed by Mengist et al. (2019)—namely, Protocol, Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, Analysis, and Report. To explore the application of the flipped classroom model (FCM) in EFL listening instruction, we conducted a comprehensive search of the SCOPUS, Google Scholar, and ERIC databases. Following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, the literature selection proceeded through four sequential phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. This approach ensured a transparent and rigorous process for selecting relevant studies.

Phase 1: Identification

During the identification phase, articles were collected based on pre-established inclusion criteria. The search was conducted using Scopus, Google Scholar, and ERIC databases. Studies published between 2012 and October 2025 were considered. Scopus was chosen for its extensive coverage of scholarly literature, Google Scholar for its broad accessibility to peer-reviewed publications, and ERIC for its rich collection of full-text education research. The primary search terms were “flipped classroom” and “EFL listening”, reflecting the focus of this review. Derivatives such as “flipped classroom approach,” “flipped learning,” “listening comprehension,” “EFL learners,” and “teaching English as a foreign language” were also used. The search terms were adapted to each database's search functions to maximize the retrieval of relevant studies.

Table 1: Keywords and Derivatives Used for Article Retrieval

Main Keywords	Derivative Keywords
Flipped Classroom	Flipped classroom approach, Flipped classroom method, Flipped learning, flipped instruction, flipped pedagogy, flipped teaching, inverted classroom
EFL Listening	listening skills, listening comprehension, listening ability, receptive skills, listening performance, English listening proficiency

Table 1 presents the main keywords and derivatives used to retrieve articles related to the application of flipped learning in EFL listening instruction. The search focused on studies exploring how flipped learning approaches support the development of learners' listening skills. Following the search, all retrieved articles were evaluated against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure their relevance and alignment with the objectives of this systematic review, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1. Empirical peer-reviewed Journal articles	book chapters, books, conference proceedings, review articles, meta-analyses, and theoretical papers
2. Articles published between January 2012 and October 2025	Articles published prior to 2012 or after October 2025
3. Articles written in English	Articles written in languages other than English
4. Articles with a primary focus on flipped classroom in EFL listening	Articles not primarily focused on the flipped classroom in EFL listening instruction

Phase 2: Screening

After removing duplicate records, articles retrieved from Scopus, Google Scholar, and ERIC were screened for relevance. First, the titles were examined to determine their relevance to the research topic and the search keywords. Next, the abstracts were carefully reviewed to see if the studies met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This approach follows the recommendations of Xiao and Watson (2019), who suggest that reading abstracts is an effective strategy for evaluating the relevance of research prior to full-text examination.

Phase 3: Eligibility

In the eligibility phase, the full texts of articles passing the previous screening were reviewed to check if they met the inclusion and exclusion criteria listed in Table 2. Studies that did not meet these requirements were excluded from further analysis. This step ensured that the remaining articles were directly relevant to the review's research questions, focusing on the use of FCM in EFL listening instruction. Applying these criteria carefully helped select high-quality studies for further synthesis.

Phase 4: Inclusion

During the inclusion phase, articles that did not meet the eligibility criteria were removed. Excluded studies included non-empirical sources such as books, book chapters, conference proceedings, review articles, meta-analyses, and theoretical papers, as well as studies not published in English or outside the period from 2012 to October 2025. Additionally, articles that did not primarily focus on FCM in EFL listening instruction were excluded. This step ensured that the final selection consisted of studies directly relevant to the research questions, forming a robust evidence base for the systematic review. The article selection process is summarized in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1).

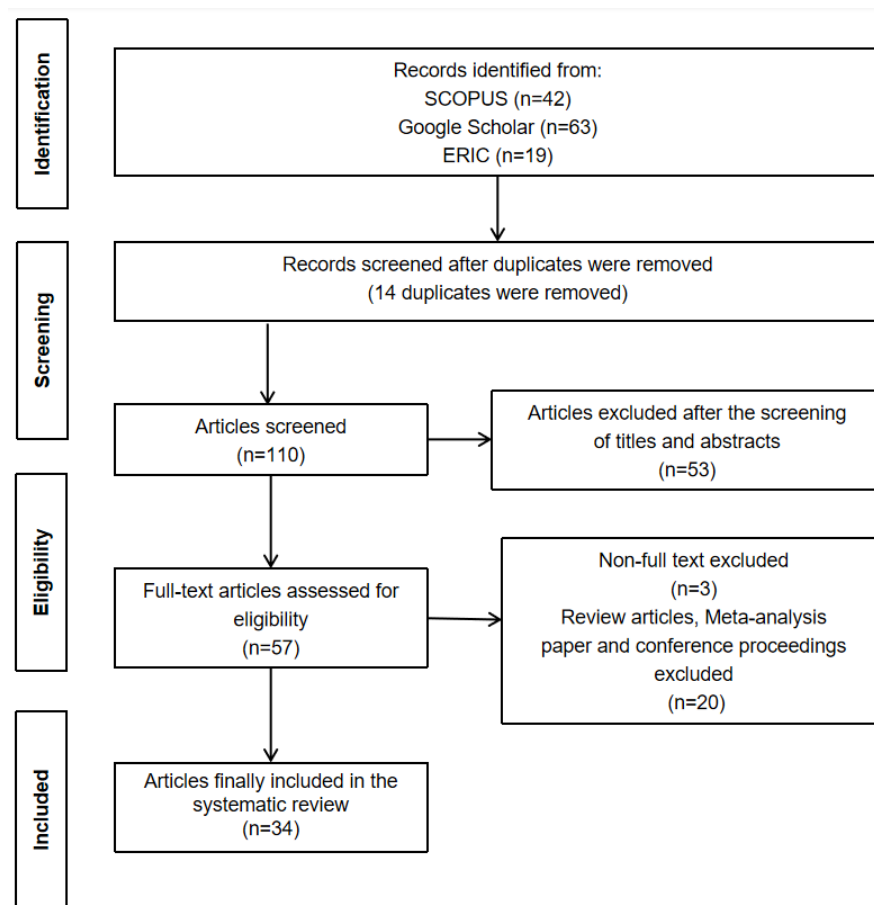


Figure 1: Flow Diagram for Systematic Review Process

Results

The Research Trends of Flipped Classroom Studies in EFL Listening Instruction

To address the first research question, the selected studies were analyzed from four perspectives: publication trends, geographic distribution, participant characteristics, and research methods. These dimensions provide a comprehensive overview of the current research landscape in flipped classroom studies on EFL listening instruction.

Publication trends. Figure 2 illustrates the publication trend of flipped classroom studies in EFL listening instruction from 2012 to October 2025. No relevant studies were found between 2012 and 2015, and only one article appeared in 2016. The number of publications remained

low until 2018, followed by a gradual increase from 2019 onwards. A clear surge was observed in 2022, with ten studies published in that year, marking the peak of research activity. Although the number slightly declined in 2023 and 2024, publications continued in 2025, indicating sustained scholarly interest in this research area.

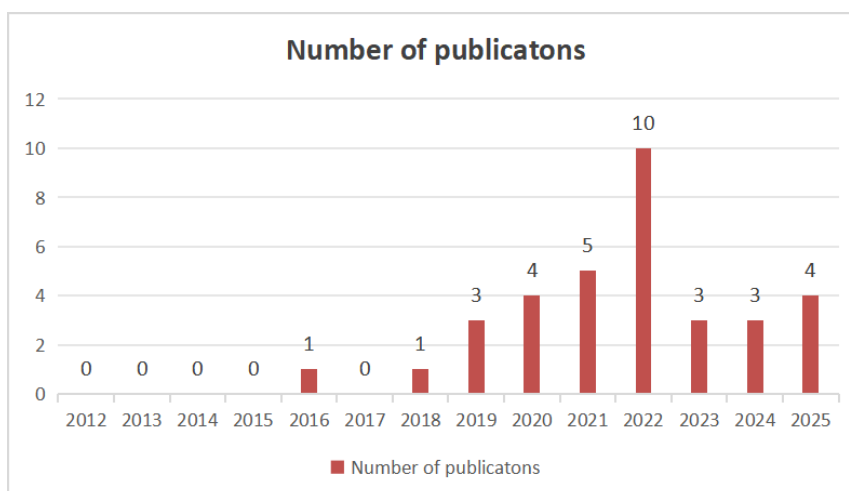


Figure 2: Number of Publications Per Year

Geographic distribution. Research on the flipped classroom in EFL Listening instruction has been unevenly distributed across countries. Iran accounted for the largest share of studies ($n = 10$), followed by Indonesia ($n = 5$), Egypt ($n = 4$), and China ($n = 4$). A smaller number of studies were reported from Turkey ($n = 2$) and several other countries, each contributing one study, including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Ecuador (Figure 3).

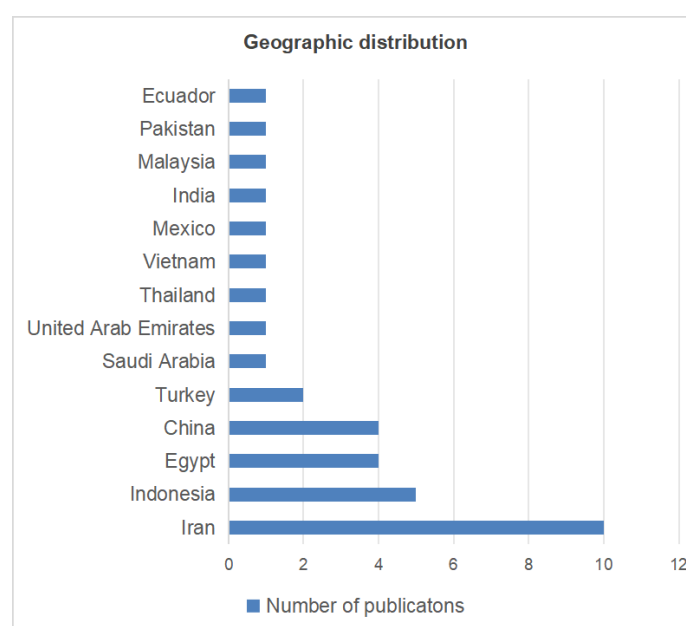


Figure 3: Geographic Distributions of the Studies

Participants characteristics. Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of participants' educational levels across the reviewed studies. Most studies involved undergraduate students ($n = 17$), followed by high school ($n = 6$), middle school ($n = 5$), and primary school ($n = 2$). Four studies did not report participants' educational backgrounds (labeled as "Untold").

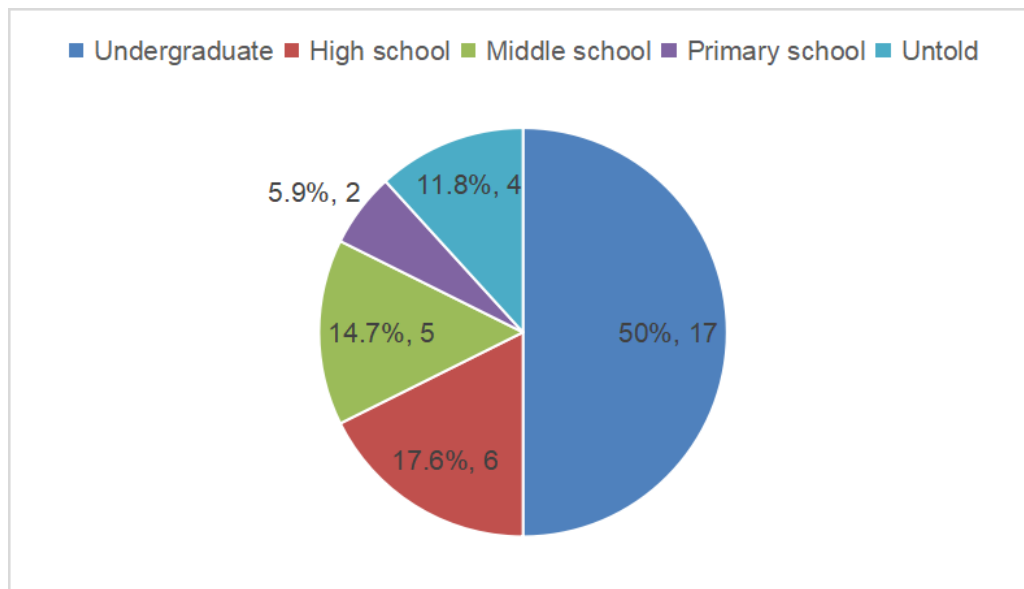


Figure 4: Participants' Educational Levels

Research methods. The 34 reviewed studies employed a range of research designs, as illustrated in Table 3. These included quasi-experimental designs with two or more groups ($n = 15$), mixed-methods approaches ($n = 8$), quasi-experimental designs with a single group ($n = 4$), case studies ($n = 4$), true experimental designs ($n = 2$), and surveys ($n = 1$). These research designs can be categorized into quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches, with quantitative designs being the most commonly employed.

Table 3: Methods and Research Designs

Methods	Research Designs
Quantitative ($n=22$)	True experimental ($n=2$), Quasi-experimental (2+ groups) ($n=15$), Quasi-experimental (1 group) ($n=4$), Survey ($n=1$)
Qualitative ($n=4$)	Case Study ($n=4$)
Mixed-method ($n=8$)	Mixed-Methods approaches ($n=8$)

In addition to research design, the studies utilized a variety of data collection instruments to measure EFL learners' listening performance, engagement, and perceptions. These instruments can be grouped into four main categories: listening tests/assessments, questionnaires/scales, interviews, and observations/logs. Table 4 summarizes the frequency of each type of instrument across the reviewed studies.

Table 4: Instruments for the Data Collection

Instruments	Frequency	Example study
Listening Tests	29	Makkawy, 2023; Riani et al., 2025
Questionnaires/ Scale	21	Tessa & Lornklang, 2021; Qiu & Luo, 2022
Interview	9	Li & Li, 2022; Syndhya & Sruthi Sri Raja, 2023
Observation/ Logs	5	Zahra & Naeem, 2024; Contreras-Moscol et al., 2025

As shown in Table 4, listening tests served as the primary assessment tool, being employed in 29 studies to quantitatively measure learning outcomes. Questionnaires or scales (n=21) were similarly prevalent for gathering self-reported data on learner perceptions. To complement these quantitative measures, nine studies conducted interviews to obtain qualitative insights. Furthermore, five studies employed either classroom observations or learning logs. Classroom observations were typically used to obtain qualitative descriptions of learner engagement, while learning logs provided quantitative records of learners' online behaviors.

Pre-class and In-class Activities in Flipped EFL Listening Classroom

The reviewed studies are examined to identify the types and design of learning activities used in flipped classrooms for EFL listening instruction. In the flipped model, students typically complete pre-class listening tasks through online or self-paced study, followed by interactive and communicative practice in class. Understanding how these pre- and in-class activities are organized helps clarify the pedagogical focus of flipped listening instruction.

Pre-Class activities. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of pre-class activities identified in the reviewed studies.

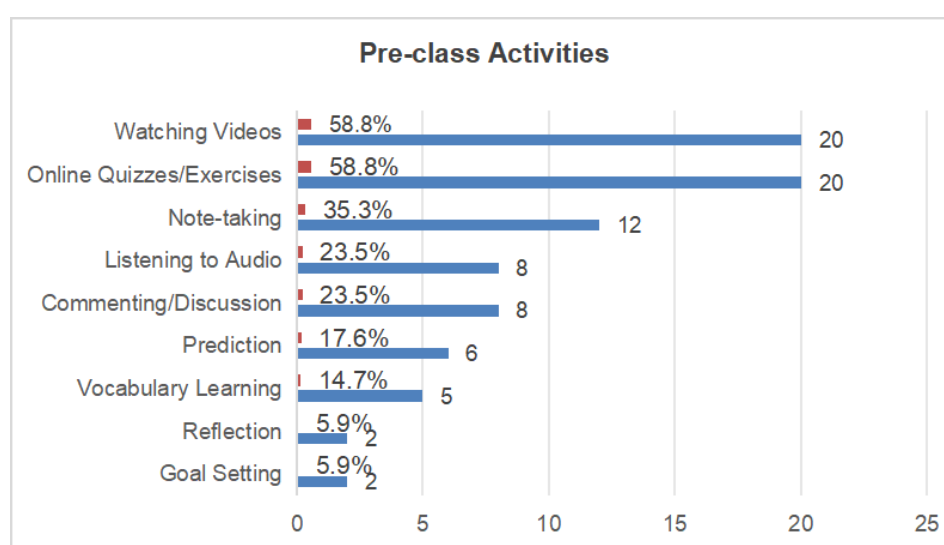
**Figure 5: Pre-class Activities**

Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of pre-class activities implemented in the studies. As each study could incorporate more than one type of activity, a variety of tasks were utilized during the pre-class phase. Video watching was the most frequently adopted activity ($n = 20$, 58.8%), followed by online quizzes or exercises ($n = 20$, 58.8%). Note-taking ($n = 12$, 35.3%), listening to audio ($n = 8$, 23.5%), and commenting or discussion ($n = 6$, 23.5%) were also common. Other activities such as prediction ($n = 5$, 17.6%), vocabulary learning ($n = 2$, 14.7%), reflection ($n = 2$, 5.9%), and goal setting ($n = 2$, 5.9%) appeared less frequently. Since pre-class activities are typically completed independently outside the classroom, collaborative tasks were less common. Nonetheless, the inclusion of online discussions indicates a growing trend toward fostering two-way interaction in pre-class learning, moving beyond one-way content delivery.

In-Class activities. Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of in-class activities reported in the reviewed studies. The figure provides a visual summary of the analytical results.

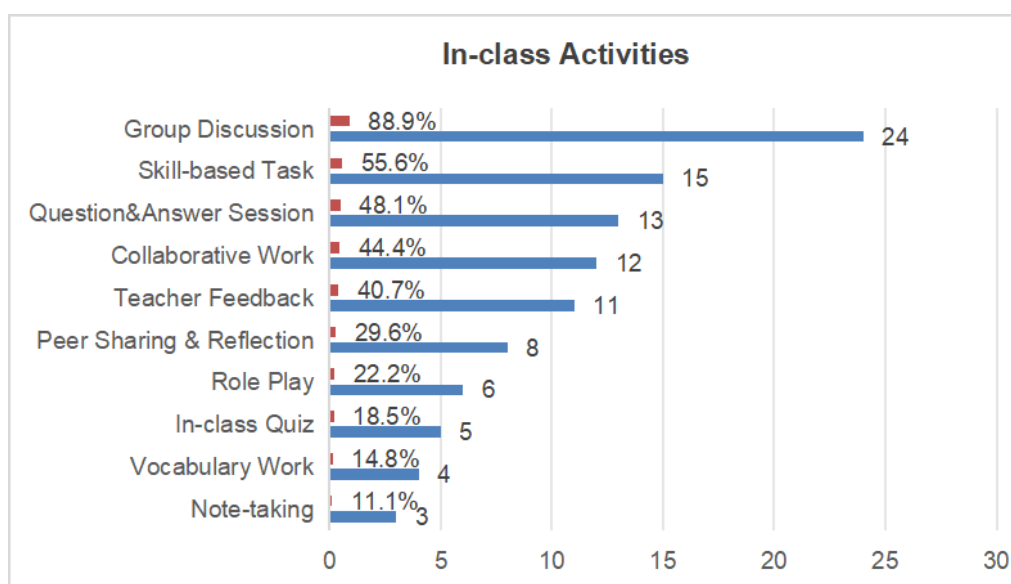


Figure 6: In-class Activities

As illustrated in Figure 6, Group Discussion was the most frequently reported activity ($n = 24$, 88.9%), followed by Skill-based Tasks ($n = 15$, 55.6%) and Q&A Sessions ($n = 13$, 48.1%). Other commonly reported activities were Collaborative Work ($n = 12$, 44.4%) and Teacher Feedback ($n = 11$, 40.7%), while less frequently reported activities included Peer Sharing & Reflection ($n = 8$, 29.6%), Role Play ($n = 6$, 22.2%), In-class Quiz ($n = 5$, 18.5%), Vocabulary Work ($n = 4$, 14.8%), and Note-taking ($n = 3$, 11.1%). Skill-based Tasks encompass listening exercises, dictation, shadowing, and comprehension checks; Q&A Sessions involve teacher- or peer-led questioning and clarification of doubts; Peer Sharing & Reflection covers student reflection, peer evaluation, and presentations; and Collaborative Work refers to group tasks, project-based activities, and cooperative exercises.

Advantages and Challenges of the FCM in EFL listening instruction

The researchers focused on two specific subcategories: the benefits and challenges of employing the FCM in EFL listening courses. These aspects are examined in greater detail in the next section.

Advantages of Flipped EFL Listening Instruction. Table 5 summarizes the advantages of flipped EFL listening instruction identified in the 34 reviewed studies. Enhancing listening comprehension was reported most frequently (n = 24, 70.6%). Other commonly noted benefits included learner autonomy (n = 18, 52.9%), promoting active learning (n = 17, 50.0%), increasing student engagement (n = 14, 41.2%), enhancing peer interaction (n = 13, 38.2%), and promoting collaborative learning (n = 12, 35.3%). Less frequently reported advantages included improving motivation (n = 9, 26.5%), enhancing self-confidence (n = 8, 23.5%), fostering student–instructor collaboration (n = 5, 14.7%), student satisfaction (n = 3, 8.8%), promoting higher-order thinking (n = 2, 5.9%), enhancing critical thinking (n = 2, 5.9%), and reducing anxiety (n = 2, 5.9%).

Table 5: Advantages of the FCM in EFL Listening Instruction

Advantages	Sample articles
Enhancing listening comprehension	Ahmad (2016); Abdelhalim (2018); Namaziandost et al. (2019); Etemadfar et al. (2020); Namaziandost et al. (2020); Shahani et al. (2020); Vaezi (2020); Khoiriyah (2021); Awad & Aburezeq (2021); Rajabi et al. (2021); Hu (2021); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Qiu & Luo (2022); Ali (2022); Çalıcı & Aytan (2022); Ebadi et al. (2022); Mohammed (2022); Duruk & Yılmaz (2023); Makkawy (2023); Risma et al. (2024); Zahra & Naeem (2024); Daeli (2025); Riani et al. (2025); Contreras-Moscol et al. (2025)
Enhancing learner autonomy	Abdelhalim (2018); Etemadfar et al. (2020); Namaziandost et al. (2020); Shahani et al. (2020); Vaezi (2020); Khoiriyah (2021); Awad & Aburezeq (2021); Rajabi et al. (2021); Hu (2021); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Qiu & Luo (2022); Ebadi et al. (2022); Irianti et al. (2022); Li & Peng (2022); Perez-Castilla et al. (2022); Syndhya & Sruthi Sri Raja (2023); Makkawy (2023); Daeli (2025)
Promoting active learning	Ahmad (2016); Abdelhalim (2018); Namaziandost et al. (2019); Etemadfar et al. (2020); Namaziandost et al. (2020); Shahani et al. (2020); Vaezi (2020); Awad & Aburezeq (2021); Rajabi et al. (2021); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Qiu & Luo (2022); Ali (2022); Çalıcı & Aytan (2022); Irianti et al. (2022); Li & Peng (2022); Makkawy (2023); Daeli (2025)
Increasing student engagement	Ahmad (2016); Abdelhalim (2018); Etemadfar et al. (2020); Namaziandost et al. (2020); Shahani et al. (2020); Vaezi (2020); Khoiriyah (2021); Awad & Aburezeq (2021); Rajabi et al. (2021); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Qiu & Luo (2022); Irianti et al. (2022); Makkawy (2023); Daeli (2025)
Enhancing peer interaction	Ahmad (2016); Etemadfar et al. (2020); Shahani et al. (2020); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Qiu & Luo (2022); Ali (2022); Çalıcı & Aytan (2022); Irianti et al. (2022); Perez-Castilla et al. (2022); Syndhya & Sruthi Sri Raja (2023); Duruk & Yılmaz (2023); Makkawy (2023); Daeli (2025)

Promoting collaborative learning	Ahmad (2016); Abdelhalim (2018); Shahani et al. (2020); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Qiu & Luo (2022); Ali (2022); Çalıcı & Aytan (2022); Irianti et al. (2022); Syndhya & Sruthi Sri Raja (2023); Duruk & Yılmaz (2023); Makkawy (2023); Daeli (2025)
Improving motivation	Namaziandost et al. (2020); Khoiriyah (2021); Awad & Aburezeq (2021); Rajabi et al. (2021); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Qiu & Luo (2022); Li & Peng (2022); Perez-Castilla et al. (2022); Zahra & Naeem (2024)
Enhancing self-confidence	Vaezi (2020); Khoiriyah (2021); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Qiu & Luo (2022); Irianti et al. (2022); Li & Peng (2022); Perez-Castilla et al. (2022); Daeli (2025)
Fostering student-instructor collaboration	Namaziandost et al. (2020); Qiu & Luo (2022); Nguyen & Nguyen (2022); Li & Peng (2022); Makkawy (2023)
Enhancing student satisfaction	Khoiriyah (2021); Tessa & Lornklang (2021); Nguyen & Nguyen (2022)
Promoting higher-order thinking	Shahani et al. (2020); Irianti et al. (2022)
Enhancing critical thinking	Etemadfar et al. (2020); Shahani et al. (2020)
Reducing anxiety	Qiu & Luo (2022); Mohamad & Raja Yacob (2024)

Challenges of Flipped EFL Listening Instruction. Table 6 presents the challenges reported in the reviewed studies. Out of the 34 studies, 15 mentioned at least one challenge. The most commonly reported issue was technical problems and limited access, which appeared in five studies ($n = 5$, 33.3%). The need for teacher guidance ($n = 4$, 26.7%) and the increased workload for students ($n = 4$, 26.7%) were also frequently noted. Other challenges were reported less often, including student resistance to the model ($n = 3$, 20.0%), difficulties with higher-order skills ($n = 2$, 13.3%), time management and learning pressure ($n = 2$, 13.3%), inconsistent student preparation ($n = 2$, 13.3%), and difficulties in material selection and design ($n = 2$, 13.3%). Finally, the heavy time demand for teachers was mentioned in only one study ($n = 1$, 6.7%).

Table 6: Challenges of the FCM in EFL Listening Instruction

Challenges	Sample articles
Technical issues & limited access	Khoiriyah (2021); Irianti et al. (2022); Nguyen & Nguyen (2022); Li & Li (2022); Daeli (2025)
Increased workload for students	Etemadfar et al. (2020); Shahani et al. (2020); Amiryousefi (2019); Li & Li (2022)

Need for teacher guidance	Etemadfar et al. (2020); Ebadi et al. (2022); Qiu & Luo (2022); Daeli (2025)
Student resistance to the model	Etemadfar et al. (2020); Shahani et al. (2020); Syndhya & Sruthi Sri Raja (2023)
Inconsistent student preparation	Etemadfar et al. (2020); Daeli (2025)
Difficulty with higher-order skills	Abdelhalim (2018); Irianti et al. (2022)
Time management & pressure	Abdelhalim (2018); Daeli (2025)
Difficulty in material selection & design	Irianti et al. (2022); Tessa & Lornklang (2021)
High time demand for teachers	Amiryousefi (2019)

Discussion

The Research Trends of Flipped Classroom Studies in EFL Listening Instruction

The analysis of flipped classroom research in EFL listening instruction indicates that the field emerged relatively late but has steadily grown over the past decade. Few studies appeared before 2015, with a notable rise in 2022, partly due to pandemic-driven changes and the integration of information and communication technology ICT in teaching, reflecting its emerging importance in EFL listening research.

Regarding geographic distribution, research is primarily concentrated in developing countries, including Iran, Indonesia, Egypt, and China, reflecting greater attention to FCM where resources are limited but digital infrastructure is developing. Consistent with earlier reviews (e.g., Pongpanich et al., 2025; Zhong & Abdullah, 2023), studies from Western developed countries remain limited, indicating potential applicability of the FCM in EFL listening instruction in developing regions.

Concerning participants, most studies involved undergraduate students, likely due to the practical ease of implementing technology-supported instruction in universities and the generally higher self-regulated learning abilities of this population. Future research could further explore the feasibility and adaptation strategies of flipped classrooms in K–12 EFL listening contexts.

In terms of research methods, quasi-experimental and mixed-methods designs were most common. Qualitative studies and detailed classroom observations remain limited, indicating a lack of understanding of learning processes and behaviors in flipped classrooms. Future research could adopt longitudinal or process-oriented designs to investigate learners' sustained engagement and development.

Pre-class and In-class Activities in Flipped EFL Listening Classroom

The systematic review shows that the FCM, which typically involves pre-class self-learning followed by in-class consolidation, aligns well with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. In the pre-class phase, students mainly build knowledge individually through tasks such as watching videos and completing online exercises. According to Sharom and Kew (2022), these activities mainly target lower-order cognitive processes—remembering and understanding—which set the stage for higher-order thinking during in-class learning. Interestingly, about a quarter of the reviewed studies included commenting and discussion activities, suggesting a growing trend toward interactive pre-class learning.

However, Zhong and Abdullah (2023) note that such practices are still not systematically incorporated into flipped classroom design, which limits their potential to fully engage students. Structured pre-class frameworks, such as the “Watching, Online Discussing, Summarizing, and Querying” (WOSQ) approach proposed by Noroozi et al. (2020), offer a more systematic way to enhance engagement and better prepare learners for in-class activities.

In flipped EFL listening classrooms, group discussions occur most frequently. It reflects a move from traditional teacher-led lectures to more student-centered learning (Zou & Xie, 2019). This shift also aligns with the higher-order cognitive levels in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy such as application and analysis. By participating in discussions, problem-solving tasks, and project-based activities, students can apply their knowledge and develop critical thinking skills (Hwang et al., 2015). Skill-based tasks, including listening exercises, dictation, and shadowing, are also common, emphasizing practice and consolidation of listening skills during class. This structured practice supports improved listening comprehension and accuracy (Mohammed, 2022).

At the start of the class, Q&A sessions help clarify students' questions, promoting interactive communication rather than passive listening. Research suggests that well-designed in-class activities can further enhance learning. For instance, Rezaeyan et al. (2025) show that guided reflection on personal goals and collaborative tasks can turn pre-class preparation into deeper understanding. Such interactive and reflective activities reinforce learning, boost engagement, and strengthen students' confidence, highlighting the value of dedicating class time to participatory, well-organized learning.

Advantages and Challenges of the FCM in EFL listening instruction

The review of 34 studies shows that the FCM generally has a positive effect on EFL listening instruction, although several recurring challenges limit its implementation. The most-reported benefits include improved listening comprehension, enhanced learner autonomy, and increased active learning. These benefits, however, are influenced by contextual and institutional factors.

The most consistent finding is that the FCM significantly improves learners' listening comprehension. This conclusion is quantitatively substantiated by a large majority of the included studies. Most quantitative studies confirmed that flipped classrooms outperform traditional instruction. Notably, while conventional flipped approaches sometimes showed no advantage, goal-oriented flipped models led to better outcomes (Rezaeyan et al., 2025), suggesting that complementary strategies like explicit goal-setting enhance the model's effectiveness.

Another important benefit is the promotion of learner autonomy and active learning. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), FCM environments give students greater control and ownership over learning. Online resources and self-paced materials, such as WhatsApp (Abdelhalim, 2018) and Google Classroom (Tessa & Lornklang, 2021), support independent exploration. In-class discussions and collaborative tasks (Ahmad, 2016; Irianti et al., 2022) provide opportunities for joint knowledge construction, highlighting the role of autonomy and active engagement in developing listening skills.

Despite these benefits, several challenges limit the effective use of the flipped approach in EFL listening classrooms. Technical barriers and unequal access are the most commonly reported issues, especially in under-resourced institutions (Irianti et al., 2022; Li & Li, 2022), which can hinder students from completing pre-class listening tasks and widen performance gaps.

Pedagogical challenges also exist, such as the need for teacher guidance and increased student workload. Qiu and Luo (2022) reported that many students struggled with time management and felt overwhelmed by autonomous learning. Without proper scaffolding, FCM-promoted autonomy may lead to frustration rather than engagement.

Learner-related factors, including resistance and lack of preparation, were also observed, with some students showing low motivation or unwillingness to engage with pre-class tasks (Etemadfar et al., 2020; Shahani et al., 2020; Syndhya & Sruthi Sri Raja, 2023).

Overall, the benefits of the flipped classroom in EFL listening instruction appear to outweigh the drawbacks. Successful implementation, however, depends on technological readiness, pedagogical flexibility, and institutional support. Future research could focus on strategies such as providing technical training for teachers and students, designing reasonable pre-class workloads, adding guidance to support autonomous learning, and testing instructional designs that balance independence with support.

Conclusion

This review examined 34 empirical studies on the flipped classroom in EFL listening instruction. The findings suggest that the flipped model is more than just a rearrangement of instructional time—it shifts learning from passive reception to active knowledge construction. Students in flipped classrooms often show improvements in listening comprehension, supported by greater autonomy, active participation, and collaboration. However, these benefits require addressing challenges such as technological gaps and the need for pedagogical guidance to help students manage cognitive demands and develop self-regulation skills. For instructors, this means that effective implementation involves more than flipping the classroom; it requires well-designed pre-class materials, structured in-class activities, and explicit strategy training. For researchers, the results suggest examining specific design features, such as goal-setting, and exploring approaches that can be adapted to different educational contexts.

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