

Components for the Design of a Flipped Classroom Module for EFL Pronunciation Learning: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

Xin Zhang

School of Foreign Languages, Kaili University, China.

Asmaa AlSaqqaf (Corresponding Author)

Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning (PPIB),

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Malaysia.

E-mail: asma3030@ums.edu.my

Received: Sep. 23, 2025 Accepted: Dec. 2, 2025 Published: Dec. 15, 2025

doi:10.5296/ijssr.v14i1.23425 URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijssr.v14i1.23425>

Abstract

Although flipped classrooms have been explored across various language-learning contexts, their application to English pronunciation remains relatively new. This is particularly relevant for Chinese non-English majors, who continue to struggle with phonological accuracy due, in part, to traditional teacher-centred instruction. Despite extensive research on English pronunciation pedagogy, a clear synthesis of the core components of an effective flipped classroom module is still lacking. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to systematically synthesize contemporary empirical evidence to identify the essential elements that constitute an effective flipped classroom model for pronunciation instruction. To address this gap, the present study undertakes a systematic literature review of 10 empirical investigations published between 2018 and 2023, derived from an initial corpus of 1,518 journal articles identified across Scopus, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and Springer. Analysis reveals five critical themes underpinning a successful module: *instructional goals*, *time of intervention*, *pedagogical sequencing*, *learning resources*, and *student evaluation*. The findings suggest that the deliberate integration of these elements provides instructors with a structured framework that can enhance instructional effectiveness and support EFL learners in improving their pronunciation skills.

Keywords: Module Development, Systematic Literature Review, English Pronunciation, EFL Learners

1. Introduction

Pronunciation, as one of the main pillars of language learning, is a crucial component of the process of communicative competence reinforcement (based on grammatical and lexical knowledge) (AlSaqqaf et al., 2023). In its order, it is imperative to enable comprehensible and clear communication, therefore, preventing misunderstandings. The English sound system, all its vowels, consonants, and suprasegmental features (intonation, etc.), being a command, is a right to general competence, which allows an individual to be able to communicate in a plurality of settings (Baranlucarz, 2014). Consequently, researchers in the field of language teaching have been advocating the explicit incorporation of pronunciation instruction into language classes (Joan & Mayya, 2017; Saito & Plonsky, 2019). Relevant research demonstrates a high degree of association between phonological and language proficiency with instructional programs that are designed to increase accuracy and establish learner confidence and fluency, which could equip them to enter more diversified communicative interactions.

In the education system, a module can be described as an independent unit of instruction that aims at addressing a particular skill or learning goal (Russell, 1974, & AlSaqqaf, et al., 2024). It possesses a scaffold system of skill acquisition and allows gradual and attentive learning. A good pronunciation module, in turn, provides the learner in question with the tools and the systematic exercises that he or she is supposed to master to learn how to produce orally. The immediate impact of the application of such a module in English language courses will be the promotion of the general competence, the communicative skills, and the self-esteem of the learners. With this background, the present research was formulated. To meet the demand of the evidence-based instructional design, the research employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to identify and investigate the main aspects of an efficient flipped classroom module with particular features that can be applied in the learning of English pronunciation by EFL students.

1.1 Research Aim

This study aims to synthesize empirical research-based data related to the application of flipped classrooms in teaching English pronunciation, specifically among Chinese non-English major learners. SLR in this research aims at identifying, categorizing, and conceptualizing the major constituents that form the basis of an effective flipped classroom module through analyzing empirical research published between 2018 and 2023. This purpose can be seen as the need to explain how the design of flipped instruction may be optimized to overcome the timeless issues of phonological accuracy, and that offers a consistent guideline for future pedagogical activity.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This paper could bridge a significant gap in the relevant literature as it provides a synthesized summary of the key components needed for developing an effective flipped classroom module to teach English pronunciation. Although the area of research on the English pronunciation pedagogy is wide-ranging, there is a lack of discussion about how flipped

learning could be arranged systematically to serve the specified purpose. This review offers a practical and evidence-based outline by presenting five main themes, i.e., *instructional goals, time of intervention, pedagogical sequencing, learning resources, and student evaluation*. The results could be used to contribute to the promotion of better learner performance and guide the elaboration of more innovative and learner-centred methods in the delivery of EFL pronunciation instructions.

1.3 Delimitations of the Study

This review deliberately aims at the studies in the field published after 2018 to reflect the latest trends in the practice of the flipped classroom application to teaching English pronunciation. Peer-reviewed journal articles published by Scopus and ERIC, ScienceDirect and Springer were only considered to ensure that they are methodologically and scholarly sound. Moreover, only EFL studies are reviewed, especially in the context of higher education institutions since the purpose is to guide pedagogies that apply to this group of learners.

2. Method

The SLR was carefully carried out to explore instructional techniques applied in flipped classroom pedagogy as discussed in past investigations. Following the strict rules of meta-analysis, the researchers were able to guarantee the transparency and methodological adequacy of the review, which increased its level of credibility and its applicability to the scientific community. The SLR is an effective way to address possible biases and organize the efficient synthesis of studies by applying a systematic search strategy consisting of four separate steps: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Shaffril et al., 2020), which are as follows:

2.1 Identification

The first of these was the identification of the relevant studies in the different academic databases and other sources using a comprehensive search strategy guided by the research question.

2.2 Screening

Thereafter, the identified studies were screened to rule out duplicates and the studies that failed to meet the pre-defined inclusion criteria, to guarantee the relevance and quality of the literature that was included.

2.3 Eligibility

The studies were carefully evaluated by a set of predefined eligibility criteria to ascertain whether they were eligible to be incorporated in the review. This strict procedure allowed including in the analysis only the studies with high methodological quality and direct interest in the research question.

2.4 Inclusion

The last step was the inclusion of the eligible studies into the review and extraction of the relevant data to be synthesized and analyzed. This methodology has helped to include relevant and credible studies that have added to the validity and completeness of the findings of the review.

Following these strict meta-analysis guidelines, the SLR can be used as a strong basis in the interpretation of the instructional aspects of the flipped classroom instruction in an EFL learning classroom. The ensuing parts can provide useful facts and viable suggestions to the researchers who want to implement the concept of flipped classroom modules in their teaching activities effectively.

The current paper was carried out using a systematic review as the methodology to detail and examine the available literature related to the application of flipped classrooms to enhance English pronunciation in EFL teaching settings. The search in a database was performed in Scopus, Eric, ScienceDirect and Springer among journal articles that have been published in the past 3 years, namely 2018–2023. The search strategy entailed the use of a combination of keywords, such as flipped classroom, EFL pronunciation, and pronunciation teaching.

The preliminary search of the database provided 1518 potential articles. In achieving data integrity, duplicate records ($n = 25$) were carefully eliminated, and there was a total of 1493 unique articles. The snowball method was then applied with the practice of a narrow sampling to find other suitable studies based on the reference lists of the already found articles.

Rigorous inclusion criteria were pre-determined to make sure that the focus of the study was not lost. Articles which failed to directly address the issue of how English pronunciation could be improved in an EFL teaching situation were filtered out during the review process. This methodological system was used to select a very relevant and extensive set of studies that could be further analyzed.

The researchers aimed to carry out an investigation of the studies specifically devoted to the improvement of English pronunciation in the setting of EFL teaching, according to the selection criterion previously established. They were included in the following way:) Relevance to English pronunciation instruction in EFL programs; b) Scope that would include primary school through university.

One hundred papers were reviewed, and 10 articles were found to fit these requirements. All the chosen papers were carefully analyzed to make sure that they met the research objectives of the study. A four-stage flowchart (Figure 1) was created in order to give a graphical depiction of the process of paper selection. The flow chart shows the sequential flow of the process of determining the most appropriate studies to be included in the review.

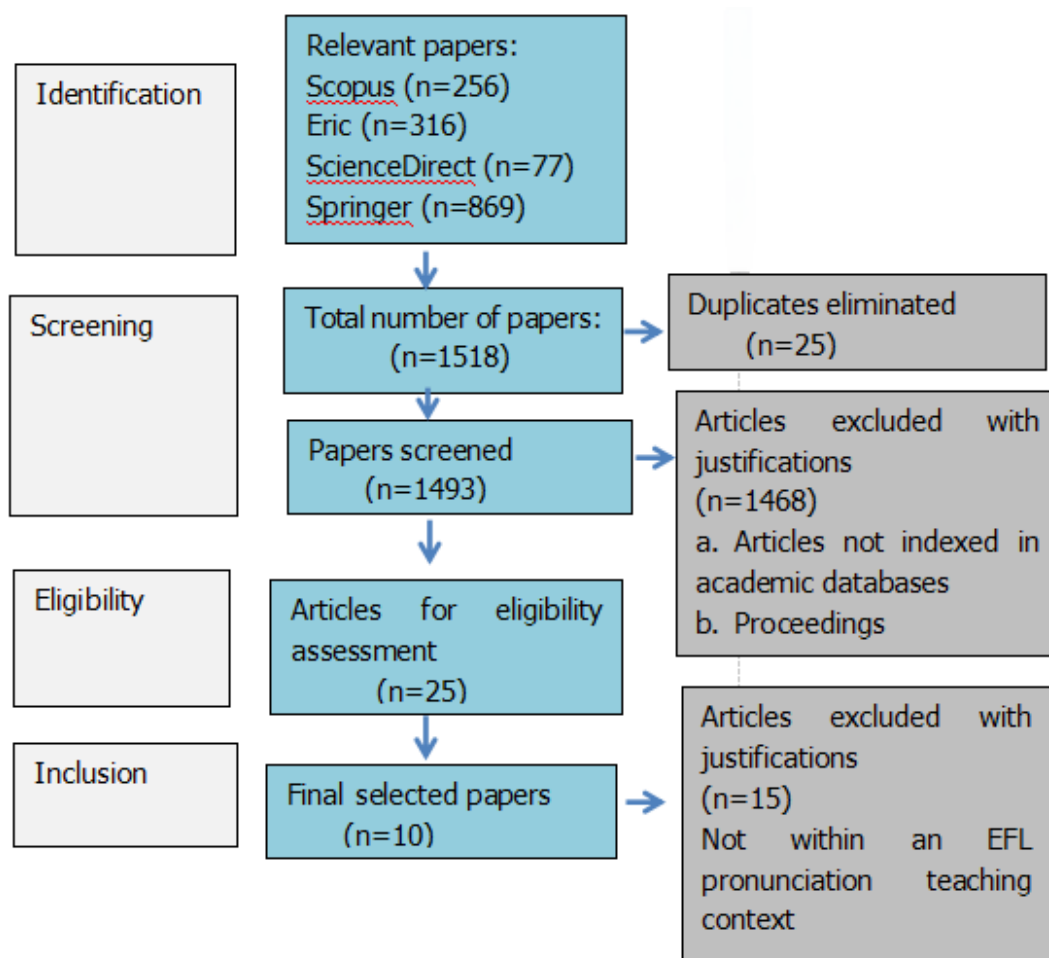


Figure 1. Flowchart of the Systematic Literature Review Method

According to the systematic review protocol that was previously established, the data were extracted from 10 eligible articles. Table 1 below is the final result of this process that gives a tabular overview of the literature review findings. The table demonstrates how varied the themes that appeared in the systematic review were. Such themes cover aspects of interest to the research question and provide information on the current state of knowledge and the areas of research to continue.

The 10 studies that were included in the systematic review were mostly conducted in China (n=7) (Chen, 2018; Min, 2018; Wen, 2018; Sheng et al., 2019; Zhang, 2019; Lin, 2019; Xue and Dunham, 2021), with the others being based in Iraq (Mofti, 2020), Turkey (Bakla, 2018), and Indonesia (Harunasari, 2020). Regarding methodological framework, over 50 % of the research (n=6) had an empirical research design, and the rest 4 papers had a theoretical proposal or recommendation to apply the concept of a flipped classroom when teaching English pronunciation. The studies were diverse in terms of target population, with 4 studies having English majors, 1 study having non-English majors and 1 having students from middle school.

Table 1. Thematical Analysis of the Systematic Literature Review

Theme	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Objectives of the module	Improvement of the teaching and learning	7	20%
	Influence of the flipped classroom	3	30%
Duration of Intervention	10 weeks	2	20%
	12 weeks	2	20%
	15 weeks	2	20%
	—	4	40%
Sequence of English pronunciation teaching	Single vowels, text	10	100%
Materials	Video lectures, pronunciation exercises, and authentic listening materials	10	100%
Assessment of students	From students and teachers, qualitative and quantitative assessments	10	100%

3. Results and Analysis on Flipped Classroom Teaching Module Components

The systematic literature review showed that most of the studies ($n = 7$) took the flipped classroom teaching with the aim of enhancing instructional practices. Regarding the period of intervention, 6 studies included information regarding the weeks of the intervention: 10, 12, 15 (2 studies each). With regards to the order of instruction on pronunciation in English, all the 10 studies shared a common order of English pronunciation instruction, starting with single vowels and then moving to reading a text. In terms of instructional materials, 10 studies used video lectures, pronunciation exercises, and authentic listening materials in their studies. As to the student assessment, all 10 studies used a multifaceted approach to student assessment, which included learners, peers and teachers. The students' progress was assessed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Results of the systematic literature review of 10 studies revealed the 5 main elements of a learning module on flipped classroom teaching: module purpose, length of intervention, teaching sequence of learning English pronunciation, learning materials and evaluation of students.

Table 2. Details of the Flipped Classroom Teaching (10 Studies)

	Objectives of the Module		Duration of Intervention			Sequence of English Pronunciation Teaching	Materials	Assessment of Students
	Improvement of the teaching and learning	Influence of the flipped classroom	10 weeks	12 weeks	15 weeks	Single vowels, text	Video lectures, pronunciation exercises, and authentic listening materials	From students and teachers, qualitative and quantitative assessments
Chen, 2018	√					√	√	√
Min, 2018	√					√	√	√
Bakla, 2018				√		√	√	√
Wen, 2018	√					√	√	√
Sheng et al., 2019		√	√			√	√	√
Zhang, 2019		√	√			√	√	√
Lin, 2019	√					√	√	√
Mofti, 2020					√	√	√	√
Harunasari, 2020		√		√		√	√	√
Xue & Dunham, 2021					√	√	√	√

This research aims to explore the application of the English pronunciation flipped classroom teaching module in earlier studies using a systematic literature review. In particular, the research will determine and discuss the key elements of this module.

4. Objectives of the Module

Research objectives form the core of any research process, as they will be used as guiding principles during its planning, execution, and evaluation (Creswell, 2018). They are important because they allow obtaining clarity on the research question, scope and expected outcomes. On the other hand, research without specified aims and objectives may have counterproductive results (Creswell, 2018):

Unfocused and vague research: This may be caused by the lack of objectives, which may lead to the inability to have a specific research question and the obscuring of the desired outcomes. Lack of efficiency in data collection: Sometimes, without objectives, data collection efforts

can be haphazard and inefficient, thus providing irrelevant or inadequate data to be analyzed. Bias and subjectivity: When there are no objectives, there is a high possibility of the research process being affected by bias and subjectivity, thus depriving the results of reliability and validity.

The research goals of some studies were analyzed to demonstrate their significance and purpose. The literature on the factors affecting online learning has been researched by researchers like Idrizi et al. (2021), Park and Robinson (2022), and Douglas et al. (2023). The aims of their research would be to determine the factors that are predictive of success in online learning settings and the connection between these factors and academic performance in online courses.

These aims give a good comprehension of the research questions under investigation and the results. They also provide direction in the design and implementation of the studies and make sure that data collection activities are effective and focused. Besides, researchers specify their goals, which can decrease the probability of bias and subjectivity, increasing the validity of their results. Based on the suggestions of the literature, the goals of the Flipped Classroom Teaching Module can be explained in the following way:

- a. To improve the pronunciation of the English language among the students by using the Flipped Classroom Teaching Module.
- b. To instruct learners on effective mastery of the English pronunciation.
- c. So that the students develop an interest and desire to learn English pronunciation.

5. Duration of Intervention

The length of an intervention is an important variable that has a major effect on its effectiveness and results (Dunlosky et al., 2013; AlSaqqaf et al., 2024). Scientists should be careful enough in deciding the duration of their intervention based on the objectives, target population and expected outcomes.

After the SRL, 10 articles meeting the requirements set by the study were carefully screened. The durations of intervention were different in these articles. In the six empirical studies, two studies conducted interventions of 15 weeks (Mofti, 2020; Xue and Dunham, 2021), and the other two studies conducted interventions of 12 weeks (Bakla, 2018; Harunasari, 2020). The other two empirical studies used 10 weeks of intervention (Zhang, 2019; Sheng et al., 2019). The average span of the intervention of the nine studies was 12.3 weeks, with 10-15 weeks.

6. Teaching Sequence of English Pronunciation

The systematic and sequential method of teaching English pronunciation requires teaching pronunciation aspects in a logical and progressive way of teaching the pronunciation (Zhang, 2018; Hu & AlSaqqaf, 2023). Such a sequential process corresponds to the cognitive and perceptual development of language learners, as it will enable them to build a mental picture of the English sound system step by step.

The analysis of 10 articles received with the help of the SRL helped to conclude that the following components should be included in the teaching tasks of an English pronunciation course (phonetic alphabet learning, intonation training, pronunciation discrimination, pronunciation imitation) (Min, 2018; Bakla, 2018; Chen, 2018). These steps maintain an organized and gradual method of teaching pronunciation as they allow a learner to build the knowledge and skills in a specific order.

English pronunciation teaching needs to take a logical and sequential pattern and should lead the learner through the different facets of pronunciation in a stepwise and gradual order (Zhang, 2018; Nhi Nguyen and AlSaqqaf, 2023). Such a step-by-step methodology is compatible with the cognitive and perceptual maturation of linguistic learners and allows them to build up a mental map of the English sound system gradually.

The analysis of 10 articles obtained from the SRL allowed concluding that a teaching activity related to an English pronunciation course should be a sequence of work with vowels to text reading (Lo & Hew, 2017; Min, 2018; Wen, 2018).

7. Materials

Instructional material is a key to the creation of an exciting, accommodating, and efficient learning environment (Muir et al., 2022). They contribute to:

7.1 Increased Participation of Students

Materials that promote the active participation of the students in the learning process will lead to interest and motivation.

7.2 Better Understanding

Well-developed content facilitates understanding the concepts and ideas and provides them to students in a more convenient way.

7.3 Efficient Learning Outcomes

Learning materials that are in line with the objectives of learning and using evidence-based practices enable effective learning and knowledge retention.

After conducting an SRL of ten articles, it was established that the instructional resources that are usually used in the flipped classroom strategies are:

7.4 Video Lectures

These offer interesting and organized delivery of content, since learners can learn the learning materials at their convenience.

7.5 Pronunciation Activities

Interactive activities aimed to strengthen pronunciation skills and give the learners a chance to practice and get feedback.

7.6 Authentic Listening Materials

Authentic listening materials help shape listening comprehension and improve pronunciation accuracy.

8. Assessment of Students

Language learning requires routine practice and assessment to improve pronunciation skills (Mofti, 2020). The teaching module of the flipped classroom includes the following assessment elements in this respect:

8.1 In-class Exercises

Each lesson is accompanied by corresponding exercises that will offer them a chance to practice the concepts of pronunciation immediately and reinforce the previously learned concepts.

8.2 Homework Assignments

Homework assignments are given to support the learning process and evaluate students in terms of their achievement outside the classroom.

Based on the knowledge acquired during the analysis of the ten articles that were chosen based on the SRL, one must admit that the evaluation of students in the context of pronunciation teaching must be rather multidimensional. This method is used by both students and teachers actively, with the incorporation of a variety of teaching methodologies that include learning independently, cooperative learning, and inquiry learning.

9. Conclusion

This literature review has presented and examined the most crucial elements of a functional flipped classroom instructional module in teaching English pronunciation to EFL students. The five major themes that have been identified after the review are objectives of the module, duration of intervention, sequence of teaching English pronunciation, materials and assessment of students, which are quite a complete framework in designing and implementing effective flipped classroom modules to meet the specific needs of the EFL learner.

By adopting the ideas presented in this paper, teachers can create a transformative learning process that could make EFL students interested in pronunciation training, achieve fluency in speaking, and improve their general knowledge of the language. The flipped classroom module, characterized by the focus on student-centred learning and the utilization of technology, could be used to transform English pronunciation teaching in EFL settings, enabling students to become self-reliant and effective speakers. Future research should explore the implementation of flipped classroom models for English pronunciation across diverse EFL contexts and learner populations, using larger samples and longitudinal designs to assess their long-term effectiveness

Acknowledgment

This paper is published under the Knowledge, Attitude, Practice (KAP) Research Group, PPIB, UMS.

References

- AlSaqqaf, A., Xin, Z., & Sharif, S. (2023). Investigating self-concept in EFL pronunciation among Chinese non-English major learners at a public university in China. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 12(2), 117–129. <https://doi.org/10.55493/5019.v12i2.4757>
- AlSaqqaf, A., Yang, Y., & Hu, K. (2024). The effectiveness of the incentive autonomous learning strategies (IALS) module to improve Chinese non-English major undergraduates' EFL speaking proficiency. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15(3) 843–852. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1503.17>
- Bakla, A. (2018). Learner-generated materials in a flipped pronunciation class: A sequential explanatory mixed-methods study. *Computers & Education*, 125, 14–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.05.017>
- Baranlucarz, M. (2014). The link between pronunciation anxiety and willingness to communicate in the foreign-language classroom: The Polish EFL context. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 70 (4), 445–473. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.2666>
- Chen, J. (2018). A comparison of Chinese and English phonetic systems from the perspective of language typology. *Yangtze River Series*, 2, 78–79.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Douglas, S., Slusser, E., & Felton, M. (2023). Academic discourse and peer collaboration in online high school learning environments. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 39(5), 1479–1492. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12809>
- Dunlosky, J., Rawson, K. A., Marsh, E. J., Nathan, M. J., & Willingham, D. T. (2013). Improving students' learning with effective learning techniques: Promising directions from cognitive and educational psychology. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 14(1), 4–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612453266>
- Harunasari, S. Y. (2020). Flipping out the classroom: a case study in Indonesian EFL class. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(4), 3572–3584. <https://doi.org/10.37200/IJPR/V24I4/PR201469>
- Hu, K., & AlSaqqaf, A. (2023). Needs analysis for developing a teaching speaking module for Chinese EFL business English undergraduates from the teachers' perspective: Assessing the validity and reliability. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 12(4), 478–494. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i4/19785>

Idrizi, E., Filiposka, S., & Trajkovijk, V. (2021). Analysis of success indicators in online learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 22(2), 205–223. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v22i2.5243>

Joan C., M., & Mayya, L. (2017). Task-based pronunciation teaching and research: Key issues and future directions. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 39(2), 381–399. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263117000183>

Lin, Y. (2019). Research on English pronunciation teaching reform under flipped classroom model: a case study of Chongqing University of Arts and Sciences. *Examination and Evaluation*, 1, 6.

Lo, C. K., & Hew, K. F. (2017). A critical review of flipped classroom challenges in K-12 education: Possible solutions and recommendations for future research. *Research & Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, 12(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-016-0044-2>

Min, Q. (2018). Research on flipped classroom teaching mode based on cloud Platform: a case study of English pronunciation teaching. *Journal of Hubei Correspondence University*. Retrieved from https://xueshu.baidu.com/usercenter/paper/show?paperid=1a4y0xt002040mj0t2460a005f261807&site=xueshu_se&hitarticle=1

Mofti K. A. (2020). The effect of using flipped classroom model to improve Iraqi EFL learners' pronunciation in English at university level. *Journal of Education College Wasit University*. <https://doi.org/10.31185/eduj.Vol1.Iss40.1569>

Muir, T., Wang, I., Trimble, A., Mainsbridge, C., & Douglas, T. (2022). Using interactive online pedagogical approaches to promote student engagement. *Education Sciences*, 12(6), 415. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12060415>

Nhi Nguyen, T. U., & AlSaqqaf, A. (2023). Impact of a DMGA Scaffolding-Based Module on Improving the EFL Speaking Skills among Vietnamese ESP Learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 14(4), 342–357. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no4.21>

Park, S., & Robinson, P. A. (2022). The effect of online academic coaches on supporting graduate students' performance in intensive online learning environments: a three-course comparison. *European Journal of Training and Development: A Journal for HRD Specialists*, 46(1–2), 70–85. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-10-2020-0144>

Russell, J. D. (1974). *Modular instruction: A guide to the design, selection, utilization and evaluation of modular materials*. Burgess Publishing Co. 7108 Ohms Lane, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55435.

Saito, K., & Plonsky, L. (2019). Effects of second language pronunciation teaching revisited: A proposed measurement framework and meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, 69(3), 652–708. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12345>

Shaffril, H., Samsuddin, S. F., & Samah, A. A. (2020). The ABC of systematic literature review: the basic methodological guidance for beginners. *Quality & Quantity*, 11, 1–28.

Sheng, H., Xutun, Z., & Liping, L. (2019). Should English pronunciation teaching be “flipped”? An empirical study based on different teaching methods, genders and language levels. *Journal of Beijing University of Chemical Technology* (Social Sciences Edition). Retrieved from

https://xueshu.baidu.com/usercenter/paper/show?paperid=194d0th0367x0a90eb330ct045620876&site=xueshu_se&hitarticle=1

Wen, T. (2018). The construction of English pronunciation teaching model from the perspective of flipped classroom: a case study of Longnan teachers college. *Journal of Gansu Normal Colleges*, 21(3), 51–53. Retrieved from

https://xueshu.baidu.com/usercenter/paper/show?paperid=1e4t0ge0347304x0k77k0gm04x220888&site=xueshu_se&hitarticle=1

Xue, X., & Dunham, R. E. (2021). Using a SPOC-based flipped classroom instructional mode to teach English pronunciation. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 36(7), 1309–1337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2021.1980404>

Zhang, L. (2019). *An experimental study on flipped classrooms of English pronunciation*. International Conference on Education, Economics and Social Science. <https://doi.org/10.2991/iceess-18.2018.44>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).