



# Mongolian Language as a Second Language in a Flipped Classroom

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**Abstract.** Along with the extension of international relations in Mongolia in recent years, the number of international students and researchers who aim to study the Mongolian language and culture has increased. A flipped classroom is a potential method in various educational fields including second language teaching. Therefore, a flipped classroom was adopted as a pedagogical method for Mongolian language teaching. Data were collected during a 16-week flipped classroom teaching of Mongolian Grammar II intermediate level course which was conducted with total enrolment of 20 international graduate students (12 females and 8 males). To assess efficiency of the course, reading and writing skills of each student were comparatively assessed through standardized testing in three phases. Based on single factor ANOVA, reading skill ( $P = 0,02$ ), and writing skill ( $P = 0,004$ ) were significantly improved. The Tukey-kramer test was being used for a critical range of writing (6.3), reading ability (7,1) leading to 18,5% of improvements to occur between beginning, middle and after classes. Even though the reading section has had downfall during class, their final estimation showed 10.15% achievements meaning a significant statistical difference. Extensive reading technique for reading competency was assessed at each level with follow-up questions. As 30% ( $n = 6$ ) for level 1–2, 60% ( $n = 12$ ) for level 3–4 and 70% ( $n = 14$ ) for level 5 were able to answer, we can infer from these task results that the students can be easily defined as intermediate level users of Mongolian language.

**Keywords:** Mongolian language · teaching methodology · grammar · reading and writing skills of international students

## 1 Introduction

Concerning the Mongolian (language) teaching methodology for international students, our country's education sector has not had enough practice and experience. Hence, the teachers and lecturers need good practices, recommendations, and research materials in relation to teaching Mongolian as a second language. In particular, we need experimental studies of teaching Mongolian online or distant teaching.

As of 2021, 80% of the foreign students in Mongolia study at postgraduate level [1]. The skills that postgraduate students should obtain at the highest level (at an academic level) are reading and writing. An international student, who is to study at Master's and

Doctorate level programs, is required to have an advanced level of academic knowledge and skills for writing their research paper in Mongolian. Thus, a lecturer teaching Mongolian language to international students regularly and creatively explores the possibilities of how to improve their writing and reading with good comprehension skills. Therefore, it is critical to assess and evaluate the international students' progress in their reading and writing skills based on their Mongolian grammar knowledge.

“Mongolian grammar II” mainly focused on promoting students' acquisition of Mongolian reading and writing skills.

It is important to teach the use of the grammatical categories of Mongolian language and of a word or a phrase in a context gradually and systematically by adopting the learner-centered method which is most appropriate for the student's level. Thereto, it is necessary to train and retrain the teachers and lecturers in this discipline besides having a complex syllabus, textbooks, and appropriate teaching methods. In addition, along with globally popular online teaching forms, the teachers and lecturers are required to have experience in using modern teaching methods in language teaching practices.

A clear example to represent the transition to the digital era of development is the online or distant teaching and learning technology that are effectively utilized in the education sector of many countries. Since the fourth industrial revolution, information technology has been introduced in education, and the practice of resolving urgent problems in education with the help of information technology has become more popular than ever before.

In other words, although the universities and institutes in some countries have been using the education mode that combines traditional and online teaching for a certain period of time, not only the modern information technology development but also the socio-economic situation has become the condition for a quick transition of all-level education services to any of the combined form of teaching/learning which are blended, hybrid and flipped.

The term flipped classroom was first coined by two American high school science teachers some time ago. Flipping the classroom usually refers to presenting new material digitally (e.g. as mini-lectures, videos, hypertext or audio) for students to access before or after class and/or at the point of need, creating more classroom time for interaction between students and the teacher. In its simplest sense, it involves asking students to view materials before class, so that class time is not taken up with the kinds of things students can do on their own. This is not much different from asking students to watch a movie or read a text before class so that limited class time can be spent on discussing the material rather than viewing or reading. There are, however, a few things that set flipped learning apart from that [3].

Some researchers specifically emphasize that it was a new pedagogical approach that combines traditional teaching practices with online teaching practices. They consider it a new type of learning that allows linking many potential methods to their contents and promoting the relations between the international students and the lecturers [4].

Besides, the international students will be more encouraged to participate in the classroom as opposed to the traditional learning practices such as organizing discussions in the form of “one lecturer – one student” and Question & Answer Pairs. A lecturer

gives an assessment of students' participation and delivers feedback. In general, it is once determined as "a method based on students' active participation" [5].

Many lecturers and researchers in education sector have experienced the flipped classroom method since 2008 on various subjects and assessed the outcomes. The results of many studies demonstrated the efficiency of the flipped classroom method, specifically, on promoting students' capacity building [6–8]. The fundamental purpose of teaching a foreign language is to promote students' acquisition of four basic language skills that are reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Wu et al. [9] implemented a pre- and post-test design and also found that EFL students' writing performance developed the English foreign language students' in grammar issues.

Researchers Öztürk and Çakıroğlu [10] have implemented a course module of self-regulated learning strategies during the lectures known as 'goal setting and planning' and 'feedback' can be considered as the factors positively influencing the reading scores of students. Instructors [11] reported consistent results in which the flipped classroom supported by interactive technology and feedback activities enhanced college students' reading skills.

Shyr and Chen [12] propose a technology-enhanced flipped language learning system (Flip2Learn) that provides facilitation and guidance for learning performance and self-regulation. The results showed that Flip2Learn not only better prepared students for flipped classrooms but also promoted learning performance compared to the conventional flipped classroom.

For the matter of learning a certain language [13, 14] based on the work of 'Sociocultural theory in second language education [15] preceded that learning process actively takes place during communication with others. This means that discussion of new material can be a good way to follow up on pre-class viewing, listening or reading. If students are given some discussion questions when they come together in class, they may be able to come up with some way of engaging with the material in groups before the teacher participates in the discussion. Listening in on the group discussion can reveal what is difficult for the students and what they find straightforward. Temporarily taking a back seat, a teacher gives the students space to engage with the material and with each student's interpretation of it.

Thus, it is important to use this method for Mongolian as a Foreign Language course in order to better support students in their process of learning and becoming more skilled in their use of Mongolian language.

Clearly, an important form of the flipped classroom is the Flipped-Mastery classroom. Although Mastery Learning has been in discussion in education since 1920s, it is said that Benjamin Bloom introduced mastery learning in educational practices in the late 1960s [16]. According to Cunningh, the main aspect of mastery learning offers the students the possibility of studying the subjects at their own pace through online, adaptive technology and the mastery-based learning offers various benefits to students of all ages [17]. Teaching Mongolian to an international student focuses on their acquisition of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Thus, our experimental classroom can be considered as a Flipped-mastery classroom.

Modern language teaching is much more focused on learning to use the target language rather than on learning about it [18, 19]. Some students will want to learn about the cultures within which the target language is used [20], and a subset of students are clearly helped with learning something about the systems underlying the target language [19], but the emphasis is firmly on developing communicative competence [21]. In other words, language learning and teaching focus on promoting students' acquisition of usage-based skills rather than theory, and it is required to select the most appropriate learning and teaching method as there might be some difficulties in promoting students' acquisition of language skills.

In a review of the study, although there are some studies on flipped classroom, language teaching methods, and language teaching for foreign nationals, there is not yet any study or experiment which specifically focuses on using flipped classroom method when teaching Mongolian as a second language. Thus, we aimed to experiment with this research regarding the teaching methodology of Mongolian as a second language to foreign students.

We focused on promoting repeated use of one grammar aspect through many exercises based on our plan to apply flipped classroom adhering to an approach "to transfer from conventional use to uncommon use" [22] when teaching Mongolian to international students with consideration of their distinct and different learning techniques and approaches.

## 2 Research Question

1. Will the reading and writing skills of the students improve when comparing the difference in learning before, during and after the course through flipped classroom?

## 3 Materials and Methods

We used the action research method to estimate reading and writing competency improvement of students.

We have taught "Mongolian Grammar II (S.MN003)" using a flipped-classroom model to twenty international students and evaluated learning outcomes.

We evaluated the students' performances in reading and writing skills after using flipped classroom teaching through three assessments such as before class assessment, midterm assessment, and after class assessment.

The class "Mongolian Grammar II" (S.MN003) covers 64 credit hours of the contents within a semester. The content covered the following topics:

- Meaning and use of Mongolian past tense, present tense, and future tense suffixes;
- Meaning and use of Mongolian verb forming suffixes;
- Meaning and use of Mongolian verb conjugation models;

Twenty students attending intermediate level Mongolian class under the advanced level program of the Mongolian University of Arts and Culture (male students 8, female

students 12) participated in the study. Seventeen of them were from the People's Republic of China and three of them were from the Republic of Korea.

In order to determine students' progress, three test scores before, during and after the course were compared using ANOVA and Tukey-kramer post hoc test.

Variance distribution of sequence frequency- Events are converted into statistical treatment of data a (beginning of the class), b (during the class), c (after the class) terms for Tukey-kramer hypothesis test to evaluate the noticeable changes in scores in comparison between each event. Statistical inference of reading and writing performances is illustrated in box plot diagrams, understanding of reading action research presented in correlation graph individually.

We used action research and conducted questionnaire surveys specifically arranging content related questions from complex to general with prepared topics. Total of 8–10 questions of 5 tasks were discussed within 9–16 weeks.

### 3.1 Assessment of Reading and Writing Skills

When we assess the students' reading skills, we request them to read a text and perform relevant tasks. To collect the qualitative data, we have conducted an action research for students' reading for understanding. We have formulated the reading and writing task under the definition "Reading and writing skills are the skills to accurately explain the words and phrases, to understand the general meaning of the text, to deliver the text meaning in their own words and process the data collected from the text." [23] and the international Extensive reading method.

Reading skill was assessed with reading tasks developed in accordance with the content and methodology of the Extensive Reading method. Extensive Reading is the process of reading alternative types of context based on personal interest in certain surroundings. Instructors let their students read books in the language they are learning and ask them to express what they understood from the books, debate and discuss the topics, and finally give marks based on the results [24]. It is a method to assess and improve the reading skills of foreign language learners.

When we used this method for our course, we prepared texts about the history, culture, and unique aspects of everyday life of Mongolia for our students; and once a week asked them to express what they understood and assessed whether they understood and could communicate efficiently what they read. We had a total of 5 such discussions.

The task aimed to assess the reading skills (before, during, or after the class) contains the following contents and consists of nine tasks.

1. Read accurately and quickly with good comprehension and proper understanding
2. Guess and explain unfamiliar words from the context
3. Answer two questions for reading comprehension, two questions for causes and analysis, and a question for evaluation purposes;
4. Make notes specifying the main idea, new idea, and information from the text.

While the first five of nine tasks focused on assessing the students' performance on articulation and understanding the actions and chronological order in the text, the 6th and 7th tasks focused on assessing the students' skills to explain the actions and information

**Table 1.** Activities performed by the instructor and the students.

Sequence	The instructor	The students
Before the class	We preliminarily prepared a video lesson explaining the Mongolian grammatical forms and how to understand, use, write and read these them. Also, we developed a sample test to improve the students' knowledge.	The students studied the lessons prepared by the lecturer. In doing so, they repeatedly practiced the video lesson at their own pace and performed the relevant tasks.
During the class	The lecturer focused on educational support activities such as starting group discussions based on tasks and exercises on how to use, write and read the grammatical forms in a dialogue, correcting grammar mistakes, evaluating the students' participation, and providing support when they perform the given tasks. Also, the lecturer observed the students' understanding of Mongolian grammar by giving a quiz or a test for reviewing the previous class contents.	The students performed the writing tasks and exercises based on their knowledge and findings acquired before the class and participated in creative educational activities by explaining the task performance to one another and playing class-related games. The students reviewed their grammar knowledge and took relevant tests.
After the class	The lecturer analyzed and evaluated the outcomes of the class.	The students learned how to effectively use their grammatical knowledge in real life.

contained in the text. While the 8th task is for assessing good comprehension of tasks, the 9th task focuses on assessing the students' skills to accurately write with the appropriate grammar.

### 3.2 The Process in the Classroom

At the beginning of the semester, the students were explained what they would learn and what knowledge and skills they would acquire during that semester, and what kind of textbooks they would use, and how their skills would be assessed and evaluated during or at the end of the semester. In addition, the students were provided with the information concerning the Course Description and Syllabus. Also, we included the information regarding how the classroom would be organized and what the lecturer and students would do during the classroom in the Course Description (Table 1).

We preliminarily prepared a video lesson explaining the Mongolian grammatical forms and how to understand, use, write and read these forms to be studied in that course under the syllabus, and uploaded the video lesson to the classroom group created on Ding Talk platform (DingTalk is an intelligent training platform created by Alibaba Group in

2014 and widely used in the education sector of the People’s Republic of China) and the students watched the video and performed the relevant tasks independently.

### 4 Results

We evaluated the results for an appropriate assessment as follows:

1. Students’ performance in reading and writing skills before the experiment;
2. Progress in reading and writing skills during the course;
3. Students’ performance in reading and writing skills after the experiment;

In doing so, we calculated the progress score by comparing the test scores as follows,

1. Comparison of test scores that demonstrate the students’ progress and changes in Mongolian **writing skills** before, during, or after the class was shown in Fig. 1.

Average of total students (n = 20) variances were 93,25 in the beginning of class which changed into 110,62 (during the class), 70.9 (after the class). ANOVA, testing method of calculating P-value (p = 0.004), was greater than 0.05 which means the research is statistically significant. Absolute differences in each class (9.5, 18,75 9.25) were greater than critical range (6,36) meaning 18.5% of growth in beginning to after class variables proving compelling improvements were achieved.

Comparison of test scores that demonstrate the students’ progress and changes in Mongolian **reading skills** before, during, or after the class was shown in Fig. 2.

Average of total student (n = 20) variance in each variable 112,47 (beginning) changed into 109, then 126.59. P-value estimated 0.02 which is greater than 0.05 resulting

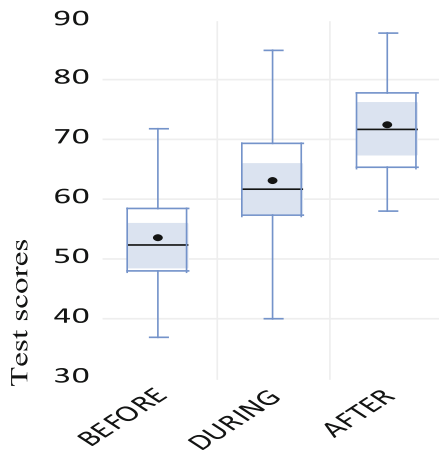
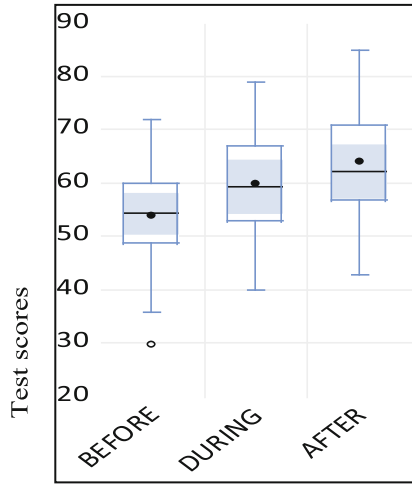
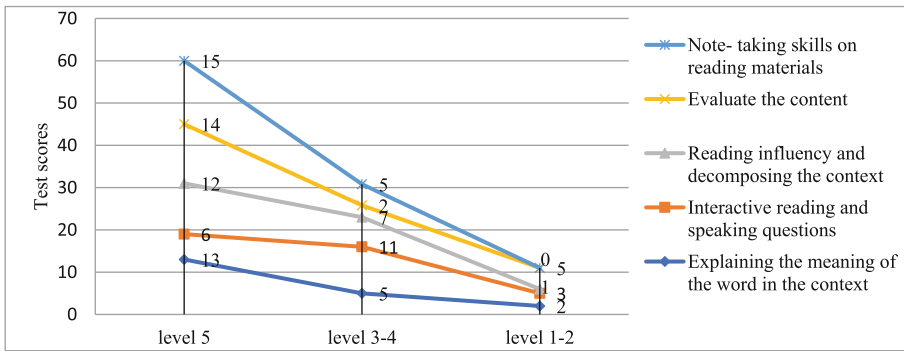


Fig. 1. Comparison of writing skills improvement.



**Fig. 2.** Comparison of reading skills improvement.



**Fig. 3.** Performance of reading activity among the students beginning and during the classes.

statistical significance. Reading sample data were tested ( $F_{critic} = 7.161$ ) while absolute difference ranges are between a to b (5.9), a to c (4.25) b to c (10.15). (a-before the class, b-during the class, b-after the class). As there were no significant improvements that occurred at the beginning and during the classes but there was significant difference between during and after class test scores. The course focused more on the reading section after 9 weeks.

We observed the progress in performing the reading tasks during the class. We have examined the reading text exercises by using the international standard Extensive reading method context to estimate the reading activity. We have organized five study sequences to evaluate the student’s progress in reading skills in extensive reading through action research. (Fig. 3).

Level 1–2 is the number of students who are able to convey an understanding of the text, answering regular questions in general who also may need further support.



Level 3–4 has operational command of the language with detailed-reasoning answers of the content. Level 5 shows compete fluency of language that handles complex and argumentation assumption questions of the content.

The action research showed that the students are good at analyzing what they read, making creative notes from their reading, and explaining the word meanings from the context. More importantly, 30 (n = 6) percent of the students answered right to lower-level questions to determine students' understanding and recall of what they read. While 60 (n = 12) percent of the students answered analyzing questions right, 70 (n = 14) percent of students gave the right answer to higher-level questions or questions for evaluation (Fig. 3). These results indicated the efficiency of the flipped-classroom method. In addition, the result demonstrates that the international students attending master's and doctoral level programs were relatively good at improving their reading skills. Seventy five percent (n = 15) of students has sufficient knowledge of text content regarding note taking indicates an adequate level of writing competence.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

Many researchers concluded that the flipped learning method has a positive effect. We can also conclude that the method had a positive learning impact on our course as well.

Flipped classroom also positively influenced the writing skills as in other studies suggesting video-assisted interactive learning, collaborative learning, peer support, and corrective activities. This is in accord with previous studies that suggest flipped classroom being positively contribute to enhancing writing skills [9, 10].

In particular, we observed that the students acquired substantial progress in their skills related to writing and reading activities by accurately understanding the meaning, actions, and chronological orders in the text, creating questions and answer discussions, and developing and transforming the content after reading a text. For international students, studying video lessons at their own pace in their appropriate time brought many benefits, promoting their creativity and enabling them to develop their skills smoothly and maintain their relationship with the lecturer and other students.

Students completed a variety of tasks to confirm what they learn from video lessons and those tasks are in the form of real, sequential actions based on the use of the language such as cooking Mongolian meals, reading daily newspapers, presenting weather forecasts. It helped to improve the effectiveness of flipped learning.

However, there was a significant difference in terms of reading scores during midterm assessment. Specifically, ability to understand passages both explicitly and implicitly was significantly lower than other skills. It was due to the fact that certain common mistakes are captured among students who spend more time to rewatch videos or pause to take notes out of school rather than gaining required knowledge for reading skills. Consequently, implementing extensive reading methods has provided flexible access to learning resources and interactively support student's reading potentials. According to Öztürk, integrating reading strategy into flipped learning can provide better learning outcomes by improving students' self-efficacy as well as planning and using study time effectively [10]. This finding is consistent with the findings reported by Huang and Hong [11] in which flipped classroom supported by interactive technology and feedback activities enhanced college students' reading skills.

One of the major influences on reading was skimming and scanning technique. Lack of practical approach which leads to spending vast amounts of time on texts resulting in occasional unsystematic mistakes. In general, teachers have always asked learners to read material before class for flipped classroom. They can also be tasked with extensive reading outside class time, of digital books (adapted for learners or full-text), podcasts (general interest or about language), and viewing video material [25]. Thus, the purpose of the extensive reading training aimed to adapt students to a fast reading style while considering their interests was effective. This study method is mostly familiar with foreign languages [24] as it can also be further used for Mongolian language teaching/learning.

According to this study, technology-enhanced flipped classroom methods positively influenced students' overall progress in skills as they watched the video lessons repeatedly and did the exercises. Finally, using flipped classroom for Mongolian language was very suitable for students who were studying at the intermediate level.

Overall, the study findings confirmed that the way students perceive and prepare information prior to class, and effective learner-centered practical activities during the class were key components to the success of flipped classrooms.

Our research limitation mostly relies on reading and writing proficiency since our main targeted direction of experiment was developing literacy articulately in this field. Furthermore, the other two language skills which are listening and speaking, and the evaluation of each variable should be analyzed using the flipped-classroom method in further research. In this way, more opportunity to testify evaluation of learner-centered active methods in second-language education is vital for teaching Mongolian language to foreign students.

## 6 Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Theoretically, this study extends the current research on flipped classrooms by trying the very method in Mongolian language classes for international students. Practically, the self-independent learning videos and classroom activities have become teaching aids to help the students avoid feelings of isolation or a lack of motivation to learn.

We consider that using a flipped classroom method significantly increased the students' writing skills. It will assist them in promoting their self-regulated learning skills and writing research papers at an advanced level. Moreover, it means that these students can build a Help Seeking strategy [10] to provide students at the elementary level with the required knowledge for writing.

In the course of classes, we observed that the students tend not to promote self-motivated learning rather opted for doing the tasks suggested by the lecturer. Thus, we consider that using online sources such as Youtube and Khan-academy will be beneficial in ensuring the effectiveness. Most importantly, creating a learning platform with complex Mongolian language classes will be much more efficient in a flipped classroom.

In addition, we identified some failures. When we reviewed students' knowledge gained from video classes through 5–10 min tests, the students made several mistakes such as guessing and copying from the video classes and classroom workbooks. It demonstrates that some of the students had poor autonomous learning skills. Thus, we consider that the lecturers should distribute specially prepared worksheets to the students to ensure

students' active engagement in the classroom. In general, we agree with the concept that students' development of self-regulation skills while learning can play an essential role in language learning in a flipped classroom [12].

The extensive reading method was more efficient in improving reading skills. Furthermore, using the Course Module [34], note-taking methods while reading such as “goal setting and planning” and “feedback” can significantly improve the current outcomes.

Using the flipped classroom method, we can evaluate four basic skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In future, comparing the learning outcomes of the control group with that of the experimental group can provide extensive information regarding Mongolian language teaching to international students in a flipped classroom.

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