

## Chapter 7

# Implementing a Flipped Classroom in Teaching Second Language Pronunciation: Challenges, Solutions, and Expectations

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### ABSTRACT

*While the philosophy of flipped classroom has recently been drawing much attention of second language teachers, integrating technology into pedagogy is often an issue. This is also the case in pronunciation teaching. Second language pronunciation teaching has been largely dependent on teachers' intuition and beliefs, realized by repetition. Although recent technology developments in the field of linguistics, namely ultrasound imaging, enable visualization of movement and motion inside the mouth, it has not yet been widely used in second language education. In this chapter, taking a self-learning website for Japanese language pronunciation, the authors explore what makes teachers stay away from technology integration into language learning and how this barrier can be overcome to implement a flipped classroom. Specifically, the authors address the importance of taking initiative in planning how technology can be integrated into pedagogy while closely collaborating with and involving other fields of study, like linguistics, as well as information technology.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Recently, a pedagogical approach called “flipped learning” or “flipped classroom” is drawing language teachers’ attention. In a flipped classroom, class hours are used for more engaging, interactive, and creative activities, while direct instruction, such as teaching the proper use of grammar, is accomplished through online video lectures outside the classroom. By implementing a flipped classroom, teachers can tailor their instruction to meet a variety of students’ interests, adjust the speed and level of difficulty, and, consequently, enhance students’ motivation and learning effectiveness. Furthermore, this approach calls for and actively promotes a shift from transmission of knowledge to creation of knowledge (Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

In most cases of flipped classroom, learning outside the classroom can be accomplished by utilizing information technology such as through online streaming websites (e.g., YouTube) and online learning websites (e.g., moodle). However, integrating technology into pedagogy is often an issue. What kind of material should be prepared? What kind of tools should be used? How can these tools be created and by whom? How long does it take to prepare all materials? How can they be combined with learning inside the classroom? Such questions seem to keep teachers away from and make them think twice before implementing a flipped classroom. This is also the case in second language education.

In this chapter, we focus on pronunciation teaching and learning to discuss flipped classroom in second language education. Although many learners cite pronunciation as one of their priorities in second language learning (Toda, 2008), pronunciation instruction remains a less explored area in terms of technology integration. Ultrasound imaging, a recent technological development in the field of linguistics, specifically speaking, enables teachers to provide effective ways of teaching Japanese pronunciation through flipped learning and teaching. With this technology, we have developed a pronunciation self-learning website and implemented it in Japanese as a Foreign Language courses at a university in western Canada. In what follows, we first review the current issues in pronunciation instruction and flipped classroom in the field of second language education. Then, we describe a flipped classroom project we conducted, including the construction of a pronunciation self-learning website. Based on a case study, we then explore the advantages of utilizing a flipped classroom in pronunciation teaching and discuss how challenges to the implementation of a flipped classroom can be possibly overcome. Specifically, the study aimed to address two research questions:

1. How do teachers and students perceive the teaching and learning of pronunciation through a flipped classroom in a university-based Japanese as a Foreign Language program?
2. How can teachers overcome the difficulties of implementing a flipped classroom for teaching Japanese pronunciation?

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Challenges in Pronunciation Teaching and Learning**

Recent research has emphasized the meaningfulness of the target language in pronunciation teaching and learning. It helps to develop a strong sense of belonging in the target language community situated in a globalized world (Derwing & Munro, 2009). In the context of Japanese pronunciation teaching, some

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