RESEARCH ARTICLE

Delving into the world of Turkish 9th grade EFL students in a flipped classroom context: Analyzing perceptions and experiences

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Abstract
Flipped classroom, which combines online and face-to-face learning, is an innovative model. This study examined the 9th grade Turkish students' experiences learning English in a flipped classroom. Nineteen students from a high school in İzmir participated in the study. An intrinsic case study was employed as a qualitative research design to investigate the effectiveness of the flipped classroom from the viewpoint of 9th grade EFL students. Data were collected through student journals, teacher journals, and focus group interviews. The data collected was analyzed by using thematic analysis.
The results showed that the flipped classroom model enhanced the students' language skills, especially in speaking, and encouraged active participation, motivation, and collaboration. Most of the students found the model more time-efficient compared to traditional classrooms. Furthermore, the students valued the flexibility of learning at their own pace but reported challenges such as adapting to the model, inadequate preparation, and internet connectivity issues.

Keywords
Flipped Classroom Model,
K-12 EFL student perceptions,
K-12 EFL student experiences,
English as a foreign language

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Introduction

In recent years, educators have paid considerable attention to the Flipped Classroom Model (FCM) due to technological advancements. The FCM is a student-centered approach that prioritizes active, peer, and collaborative learning, wherein learners assume responsibility for their learning process. In flipped classrooms, students do preliminary online tasks designated by the instructor before class time and participate in collaborative and active learning activities during the class period (Reidsema et al., 2017). In other words, the FCM offers students more active learning environments by

implementing activities like homework that are frequently performed outside of the classroom in traditional classroom settings**.** Bergmann and Sams (2012) suggest that the model allows students to learn at their own pace at home and deepen their understanding through interactive class activities.

Likewise, Başal (2015) highlights how technology will undoubtedly play an integral role in education in the twenty-first century. Many research studies suggest that digital learning enhances students' anticipation and participation in the learning experience owing to the accessibility, mobility, and interactivity of mobile devices. (Murdock & Williams, 2011; Thorne et al., 2009). Namely, technology integration in education enhances students' motivation to explore their potential, skills, and talents, fostering greater autonomy in their learning experience.

English Language Teaching (ELT) holds global significance owing to the prominence of English in sectors including education, commerce, and medicine. The primary goal of the English Language Teaching Curriculum in Türkiye is to use language effectively (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018). However, inadequate time is designated for English language instruction in elementary, middle, and high schools to successfully improve students' linguistic proficiency. Consequently, educators strive to pursue more innovative, cost- and time-effective, student-centered learning methodologies to deal with the challenges of teaching the target language within the EFL framework.

The FCM can overcome the identified difficulties by offering a time-efficient, collaborative, autonomous, and student-centered learning setting in the classroom. To address this, the Ministry of National Education in Türkiye (MoNE) redesigned its curriculum to include communicative language teaching. However, problems still exist in primary and secondary public schools in teaching English as a foreign language. In this regard, research by Demirtaş and Erdem (2015), Dinçer and Koç (2020), and Gürel and Demirhan-İşcan (2020) highlight problems such as limited class time, inadequate teaching materials, large class sizes, challenges in evaluating speaking and listening competencies, and coursebooks that fail to fulfill the demands of students.

Kırkgöz (2009) emphasizes a divergence between language education policies at the macro level and how they are carried out in the classroom at the micro level. She

contends that although the curricula are designed according to communicative language teaching methodologies, the implementation of learner-centered and communicative teaching methods is limited in EFL classes. This constraint is due to limited class time and the prevailing strategy of teacher-centered EFL instruction. Özmat and Senemoğlu (2021) also explored the challenges faced by English learners in Ankara's public secondary and high schools. They conducted a survey with 2317 students and discovered that there were a number of concerns that were prevalent, such as a lack of communicative practice in textbooks, inadequate use of visual and audio aids, inadequate training in listening and speaking, lack of language learning strategies, low self-confidence, and classroom management problems.

Based on the insights from the studies mentioned above, this research suggests that the Flipped Classroom Model (FCM) could offer solutions that are encountered in English language teaching, especially in public high schools. Additionally, implementing flipped English classes could foster learner-centered, communicative, and collaborative learning environments. This student-centered model promotes active, peer-based, and collaborative learning, with students responsible for their education. In the FCM, students complete online tasks before class and participate in interactive activities during class time (Reidsema et al., 2017). This shifts traditional homework into class time, creating a more engaging learning environment. Şensöz and Erdemir (2022) reviewed studies on the flipped classroom model in ELT in Türkiye, finding that few focused on K-12 students and most used mixed or quantitative methods. Similarly, Turan and Akdağ-Çimen (2020) found that most flipped learning studies targeted university students, with fewer focusing on K-12 participants.

Considering the insights from the studies above, this study aims to address this gap by using a qualitative research design as an intrinsic case study in a science high school to explore flipped English classrooms with K-12 students. Given the limited research on high school students' experiences with the FCM in EFL, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of learner perceptions and experiences at this level. The researcher aims to explore student motivation and challenges to assist instructors considering the FCM for their EFL courses.

Literature Review

Theoretical framework of the flipped classroom model

In the light of the principles of FCM, it can be asserted that constructivism and social constructivism theories have a close connection to the FCM, as they highlight active learning, student involvement, and learners' building up their knowledge throughout the process of learning. As defined by Gagnon and Collay (2005), constructivism involves learners building understanding through interaction with prior and new knowledge, guided by teachers who facilitate rather than solely transmit knowledge (Brown, 2014). The FCM advocates for active participation, ownership of learning, meaningful learning, and personalization, all of which are fundamental to constructivist learning theory. The FCM requires learners to be independent and self-regulated to adapt to 21st-century technological innovations in education. Tucker (2012) asserts that the implementation of the FCM enhances the learning environment by fostering greater student engagement and motivation, consistent with the theory of constructivist learning.

As a type of constructivist learning theory, social constructivism, developed by Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes social interaction and collaborative learning, with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) highlighting the gap between learners' current and potential abilities. Collaborative learning within the ZPD involves working with more knowledgeable peers or experts to accomplish tasks (Vygotsky, 1981; Feryok, 2017). Gruba (2004) states that "social constructivists promote close ties between authentic activities, collaborative learning, a variety of materials, the student ownership of outcomes, and critical reflection" (p. 3). Social constructivist learning theory argues that learners engage in educational settings characterized by interactive, collaborative, and reflective processes. During the in-class sessions of the FCM, students are required to collaborate effectively in groups to set objectives, exchange ideas, and make decisions. Furthermore, students communicate with each other in flipped classrooms via extracurricular activities such as forums and online interactions. Upon revising the fundamental principles of social constructivism, it becomes apparent that the FCM, as a learner-centered model, is grounded on this learning theory.

Students perception of the flipped classroom model in ESL/EFL contexts

Research on the FCM generally indicates that students have positive perceptions toward the model, though some negative experiences are noted. Mehring (2016) was one of the first to explore the use of FCM in EFL, highlighting its ability to create student-centered, active learning environments through digital tools. Han (2015) further explored the model's potential in second language acquisition, finding that it enhances learner autonomy and improves language learning outcomes. Webb and Doman (2020) studied the FCM in various settings, including the USA, Macau, and Colombia, and found that the use of digital tools increased student engagement and positive attitudes toward flipped learning. Similarly, despite some challenges, Shahani et al. (2021) and Nguyen (2018) reported positive perceptions and improvements in language competence among EFL learners using flipped learning.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ma and Luo (2022) implemented the FCM online for Chinese EFL undergraduates, revealing generally positive student perceptions, though some less motivated students found challenges with online platforms and interaction. Other studies, like those by Zainuddin and Perera (2019) and Shih and Huang (2020), emphasized the FCM's ability to enhance autonomous learning and metacognitive strategies in language learning.

Some studies have also focused on the FCM's impact on specific language skills. For example, Köroğlu and Çakır (2017) found that the FCM significantly improved speaking skills among pre-service English teachers, while Özkurkudis and Bümen (2019) reported that it was time-saving for teaching grammar in writing lessons. Studies such as Li and Zhou (2021) and Yakop et al. (2023) highlighted the effectiveness of the FCM in improving speaking skills and learning experiences through digital platforms.

Some studies indicate that flipped classrooms enhance autonomy and engagement but can be difficult to adapt to initially. Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018) and Hung (2015) noted that flipped classrooms encourage active learning and self-reliance. Chen Hsieh et al. (2017) found improvements in interaction and speaking skills. However, some studies, such as Chou (2020) and Han et al. (2023), highlight challenges with adapting to the model and managing course content. This finding was similarly reflected in Nguyen (2018), who examined students' perceptions of English instruction

in flipped classrooms. She noted that some students were reluctant to adjust to the new model, and adhering to the flipped learning instructions proved initially difficult.

For effective implementation, it is essential to consider student readiness and personal characteristics, such as self-directed learning and motivation (Hao, 2016). Overall, while flipped classrooms offer significant benefits, they require thoughtful planning to address potential challenges. Ye (2022) investigated the FCM in Chinese primary and secondary schools, finding that it promotes engagement, self-study skills, and higher-order thinking. However, challenges such as increased workload for teachers and insufficient self-study abilities among students were noted.

In Türkiye, studies on the FCM are mostly implemented in universities. For example, Başal (2015) found that flipped classrooms help English learners by promoting self-paced learning and participation but stressed the importance of active in-class activities. Akçor (2018) reported increased motivation and flexibility among pre-service teachers but mentioned that poor internet access sometimes hindered the preparation of learners. Çavdar (2018) emphasized the importance of engaging videos to improve student interaction and learning responsibility. Although the FCM is widely used in higher education, its application in K-12 settings is less explored. In Turkish context, studies by Kırmızı and Kömeç (2020) and Ayçiçek and Yanpar-Yelken (2018) were conducted to bridge this gap. These studies found positive impacts of the FCM on student engagement, autonomy, and motivation, but also highlighted challenges like resistance to new learning models and the time required for teachers to prepare flipped lessons. Overall, these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of flipped learning on language teaching, highlighting its advantages as well as its drawbacks.

Methodology

Research design

This study used a qualitative research design, which focuses on understanding participants' experiences of a particular phenomenon within a specific context and time (Heigham & Croker, 2009). The qualitative research approach is longitudinal, enabling

the researcher to acquire a deep and comprehensive understanding of the participants (Croker, 2009). This study aims to investigate the perceptions and experiences of 9th grade EFL students in flipped English classrooms. The study is also designed as an intrinsic case study which focuses on gaining a deep understanding of a specific case without attempting to generalize the findings or compare them with other cases (Stake, 1995). The aim is to examine the experiences and perspectives of the 9th grade EFL students in flipped English classrooms, without extending the findings beyond this specific case or making comparisons with other cases. This study addresses the following research question to understand the impact of flipped classrooms on EFL classes at a public science high school:

What are the perceptions and experiences of Turkish 9th grade EFL students at a science high school who are learning English as a foreign language in a flipped classroom?

Setting and participants

The study was conducted during the first semester of the 2022-2023 academic year at Menemen Şehit Ahmet Özsoy Science High School. The participants in the study are 14–15-year-old students familiar with using particular technological tools and applications for subject-based learning. Although they have backgrounds in technology, this is their first experience with the FCM in the context of English language learning. To reduce the students' anxieties, the researcher arranged a meeting and described the model comprehensively, underlining each phase of the implementation procedure. The participants were informed about the study's goal, and the researcher indicated that their participation was voluntary. The students who volunteered to participate in the study have received consent forms for their parents to sign.

The study lasted 8 weeks, and the EFL flipped classroom content was aligned with the 9th-grade curriculum of the MoNE. The participant students attended English lessons for 4 hours per week, with each session lasting 40 minutes. The 'Teenwise' coursebook for 9th grades, provided by the MoNE, was used for the flipped English class. The researcher also created multiple tasks and resources for both in-class and out-of-class activities to improve the flipped learning experience.

To implement the FCM, the researcher prepared lesson plans and tasks for the flipped English class, which included pre-class, in-class, and post-class sessions. Lesson videos were recorded using "Zoom" application. The FCM was delivered through the free blended learning platform "Google Classroom." The researcher benefited from the Web 2. 0 tools such as JeopardyLabs, Kahoot, Padlet, Vocaroo, Mentimeter, Wordwall, CapCut, and Canva.

Two sample weekly plans for the FCM implemented in this study are given below:

Table 1

Weekly plans for the FCM

Week & Duration	Objectives	Pre-class Assignments	In-class Activities	Post-Class Activities
1st Week 4 hours	Students: -introduce themselves and talk about their hobbies, families, and friends. -ask for directions and give directions.	Students: -watch videos on the online platform Google Classroom, take notes and practice the given expressions. -do the pre-class tasks.	-Checking the understanding of students with a quiz. -Peer work listening activity. -Collaborative reading activity -Peer work listening activity -Role-play activity to ask for and give directions	Students: -write a paragraph to introduce themselves by using the Web 2. 0 tool “Padlet”. - use the Web 2. 0 tool “Vocaroo” and record their voice describing directions from their home to the school.
2nd Week 4 hours	Students: -talk about people from different cultures, cities, and countries. - ask and answer questions about location of things and places. (place of prepositions)	Students: -watch videos on the online platform Google Classroom, take notes and practice the given expressions. -do the pre-class tasks.	-Checking their understanding by using the Web 2. 0 to “Mentimeter”. -Collaborative reading activity -Circle Chat-Speaking Activity -Describe and draw, collaborative speaking activity.	Students: - use the Web 2. 0 tool “Vocaroo” and record their voice describing their rooms.

Data collection tools and process

This study included three data collection instruments: students' journals, teacher's journals, and focus group interviews. The researcher prepared questions for journal entries and focus group interviews, which were reviewed by an external academic expert. After reaching a consensus, the data collection tools were ready for use.

Students kept weekly journals, which were collected every Friday after scheduled meetings to encourage them to share detailed insights. The questions raised in the journals were divided into three separate categories as follows: "opinions related to the out-of-class process", "opinions related to the in-class process", and "general evaluation of the Flipped Classroom Model". The researcher established a relaxed environment and assured the students of their entire sincerity, emphasizing that all provided information would remain confidential. The journal writing lasted 40 minutes.

The researcher additionally monitored each lesson and kept journals. The teacher journal as a checklist contained questions about students' experiences in learning English via the Flipped Classroom Model. In addition to Yes or No answers, the teacher journal, designed as a checklist, had a section for "additional information." Additionally, the researcher requested the support of a colleague who devoted four hours to observing the flipped English lessons. The observer utilized the researcher's prepared observation sheet and checklist to log her findings and take notes during the lesson. This assisted the teacher-researcher in analyzing the collected data from a different perspective.

For the third data collection method, this study utilized focus group interviews. The participants were interviewed, and their experiences were audio-recorded. Focus group interviews are superior to individual interviews in gathering more profound and detailed data owing to their group dynamics.

Krueger and Casey (2000) point out that focus group interviews provide "a more natural environment than that of individual interviews because participants are influencing and influenced by others just as they are in real life" (p.11). The participants answered semi-structured focus group interview questions in a relaxed and conversational manner, as Yin (2014) recommended. Two focus group interviews were conducted in the fourth and eighth weeks with different students to gather their

experiences and perceptions. Six students participated in each interview. The interviews were held in the school library, recorded, and later transcribed.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a common qualitative method for identifying and organizing patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Key themes from students' journals, the teacher's journals, and focus group interviews were systematically identified and organized based on the research questions. The researcher followed Braun and Clarke's (2012) six phases of thematic analysis: familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

Trustworthiness of the study

In this qualitative case study, the researcher played an active role throughout the entire process, spending significant time with participants and assuming various roles. Following Heigham and Croker's (2009) advice, the researcher built close relationships with participants to gain a comprehensive understanding. Pre-meetings were held to inform students about the study and obtain parental consent. The researcher kept detailed journals of each lesson and collaborated with a colleague who observed the classes using a prepared checklist, providing an additional perspective. Weekly meetings encouraged authentic student journal entries without influencing their responses. Focus group interviews were conducted with pre-prepared and additional questions, recorded, transcribed, and translated into English. To maintain objectivity, the researcher did not read student journals until after completing her own entries.

To ensure the study's trustworthiness, the researcher applied the four criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability.

- Confirmability: To ensure findings were shaped by participants' views rather than researcher bias, the researcher used an iterative process of continuous data analysis and determined themes based on participants' perspectives.

- Credibility: The study's credibility was established through triangulation, involving data collection from multiple sources (students' journals, teacher's journals, and focus group interviews).
- Transferability: Detailed descriptions of the research context and participants were provided to enable the findings to apply to other settings. The researcher ensured that data reflected authentic experiences by organizing meetings where the students documented their genuine experiences with the flipped English classroom.
- Dependability: The researcher analyzed data repeatedly to ensure consistency and sought verification from an external academic expert. The same expert also checked translations of interview data and journal entries.

Findings

The study systematically organized and identified key themes from the students' journals, the teacher's journal-checklist, and focus group interviews, correlating them with the research question. Observations based on the researcher's journal notes were presented for each theme. The themes that emerged from the study are presented below:

Time efficiency

The data analysis revealed that time efficiency was the most prominent theme in the study. The participant students noted that the FCM was more time-efficient than traditional classrooms. They appreciated how the model allowed them to learn lesson content at home via videos, freeing up class time for interactive and engaging activities. In this regard one participant said the following explanations:

"In conventional face-to-face classes, teachers spend most of the class time teaching the topic, and there is not enough time left to implement engaging activities. However, in the flipped English classes, there was plenty of time to practice our English language skills since we learned the lesson content at home. The model helps us practice more and get better at using what we have learned in English." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 1, Male).

Additionally, the participant students provided another perspective on the FCM's time efficiency. They observed significant improvements in their English skills over the

8-week period, attributing this progress to the ample in-class practice time provided by the model. One participant shared:

"Even though I have been learning English since I was in primary school, I had a hard time making correct sentences while speaking. But in the flipped English classes that went on for 8 weeks, I did much better and improved my English language skills noticeably." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 2, Male).

The participants' statements align with the researcher's observations. A notable observation by the researcher was the consensus among students that the FCM effectively optimizes in-class time. The researcher also observed that the model significantly accelerated skill development within 8 weeks. This indicates that extensive in-class practice and discussion sessions led to significant advances in their language skills.

Language skills

The analyzed data shows that adopting the FCM led to a significant improvement in participants' language skills. The model's emphasis on interactive learning and practical application was crucial in enhancing these skills, making language skills the second most prominent theme in the study. One participant expressed her views on how the model enhanced her language proficiency:

"At the beginning of the academic year, I had had very limited vocabulary in English. I could hardly speak in English, and it was challenging for me to understand something I listened to in English. However, since we started to learn English in the flipped classroom, I recognized that I gained a lot of new vocabulary. Our teacher made vocabulary teaching memorable for us. Because she used visuals and interesting examples in the videos. Additionally, in the class she made us use the new vocabulary in various interactive activities. As we did many speaking and listening activities in groups and pairs, I improved my speaking and listening skills as well. Now, I can speak English more fluently and I improved my English listening skills." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 3, Female).

Another participant indicated that the shift from traditional middle school English classes to the flipped English class enhanced his language learning experience. Incorporating speaking and listening activities with reading and writing tasks was crucial in improving his English fluency. The participant's statements are as follows:

"In middle school, English classes predominantly focused on reading and writing activities. Opportunities for speaking and listening activities were less. *However, the implementation of flipped English classes resulted in a transformation. In addition to reading and writing tasks, we participated in several speaking and listening activities. This model contributed to my proficiency in spoken English."* (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 5, Male).

The researcher's observations align with the students' statements. Initially, the students in this study had a low proficiency in English and struggled with oral

expression. However, within 8 weeks of completing the flipped English classes, most students showed noticeable improvement in their language skills. The researcher attributed this progress to the intentional inclusion of various speaking and listening activities, such as group discussions, oral presentations, dialogues, and listening comprehension exercises, which helped develop their communicative skills.

Learner autonomy

Learner autonomy emerged as another prominent theme in the study. The participants reported taking control of their learning process, making independent decisions about what and how they learned. The FCM fostered this self-directed learning approach, making learner autonomy a central concept in the study. One participant shared her experience with the FCM, particularly focusing on the pre-class aspect of the model:

> "Before each flipped English class, we had to watch videos to prepare. I planned my schedule to save time for these videos and pre-class activities like quizzes and forum discussions. Taking notes during the videos was necessary for my learning and reviewing. If I didn't understand something, I would rewind and watch it again until it was clear. This preparation helped me understand and participate more during class." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 6, Female).

One participant highlighted the necessity and importance of self-regulated learning for the successful implementation of the model, stating:

> "As we started to learn English with the FCM, I realized that I had to use my time efficiently. Because, we had to watch the videos and learn the lesson topic before class time. Therefore, I planned my day to watch the videos and do tasks to participate in the in-class time more effectively. Shortly, I became self-disciplined thanks to this model." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 5, Male).

The researcher observed that the students who initially struggled with time management and taking responsibility for their own learning found it challenging to adapt to the FCM. Despite being informed about the weekly agenda and assignments through the WhatsApp group and Google Classroom, they had difficulty developing self-regulation skills during the first three weeks of implementation. However, after three to four weeks, the students began to become more self-autonomous.

Learner engagement

The data analyzed indicates that the FCM significantly impacted students' learning experiences and outcomes, closely linked to the concept of learner engagement. The flipped English class increased student participation, interaction, and enjoyment, as the active and engaging learning environment fostered their learning. Consequently, learner engagement appeared as a significant theme of the study. One participant

explained her experience with the model by contrasting it with conventional English classes:

"In conventional English classes, we used to listen to teacher and write down what the teacher told us. However, in the flipped English class, we took part in many activities such as role play, acting a dialogue out and group games, instead of just sitting and listening to teacher. We were active during the in-class time. As we learned English with fun, I can still remember even the words in the first week of the flipped English class." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 3, Female).

All participants reported that the FCM enhanced their engagement by offering a more enjoyable and active learning environment compared to conventional English classes. One participant's statement illustrates this clearly:

"When I was in primary and middle school, I did not enjoy English classes, and I had difficulty learning English. But now, in the flipped English classes, it is easy and enjoyable for me to learn English. We engage in a lot of interactive activities in the flipped English classes, and we are active all the time. Because we engage in a variety of enjoyable activities that make the learning process dynamic and interesting." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 8, Female).

Based on her observations, the researcher found similar results. Her notes indicated that flipped learning significantly increased student engagement. Most students actively participated in various activities, such as group discussions, role plays, and problem-solving exercises, which contrasted with the passive listening often seen in conventional classrooms.

Motivation

The study found that FCM, with its emphasis on interaction and active learning, fostered a constructive and engaging classroom environment. The participants stated that this atmosphere enhanced their sense of belonging and motivation. As a result, motivation emerged as a significant theme. One participant noted increased motivation towards the English subject since starting the flipped class:

"I was one of those students who did not like English class at all. However, as I started to learn English in the flipped class, I have been more motivated to learn English. The activities during the in-class time were fun and engaging. We did many interactive group activities. This created a positive learning environment for us." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 9, Female).

The participants' experiences revealed that motivation in the FCM was fostered through active engagement, diverse activities, positive environments, student-centered approaches, and collaborative learning. These factors combined to create an environment where students were more motivated to learn and participate. Additionally, the use of Web 2.0 tools like Vocarro, Jeopardylabs, Mentimeter, and Canva played a

key role in enhancing motivation. In this regard, one of the participants made the following comment:

"Compared to conventional face-to-face classes, I feel more motivated in the flipped English class. Because the class time in the flipped learning is more engaging and enjoyable. Instead of listening to the teacher and taking notes, we are involved in many group activities in the classroom. During in-class time we played games using apps such as Kahoot and Jeopardy labs, this was fun for me and for my classmates." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 1, Male).

The researcher's observations support the idea that the FCM significantly boosts student motivation. The transition from passive to active participation, the implementation of entertaining and interactive activities, and the establishment of a positive classroom environment all enhanced student motivation.

Collaborative skills

Another prominent theme from the data was collaborative skills. The results showed that interactive tasks and group activities in the FCM encouraged students to engage more with their peers, promoting collaborative language learning. The majority of the participants indicated frequent group and pair work in the flipped English class, which helped them improve collaborative skills. One participant's quote illustrates this:

"Because we learned the lesson contents at home by watching the videos, we had more time to engage in a lot of group and pair works in class in the FCM. In contrast to conventional face-to-face classes, we implemented activities such as role-plays and acting-out dialogues in the flipped English class." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 10, Female).

Participating in group and pair activities during in-class sessions was crucial for helping shy students develop communicative and collaborative skills. Despite the initial challenge of adapting to these activities, they became transformative experiences for many, as reflected in one participant's statement:

"I am usually a quiet person. At first, talking in English during class group activities made me nervous, especially when our teacher encouraged us to join in. These new activities were a bit hard for me in the beginning. But as time went on, I got used to them. Now, I feel more comfortable talking to my classmates. I am not as shy as before, and I am doing well in the group activities because I have adapted group and peer work activities." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 3, Female).

The researcher observed that flipped learning significantly enhanced students' collaborative skills. Many students actively participated in group discussions, exchanged ideas during peer work, and frequently took on the role of peer tutors, helping classmates with challenging concepts. Initially, the students struggled with collaborative activities due to limited prior experience and fear of making mistakes. However, within 3-4 weeks, they adapted to these activities and became more comfortable and engaged.

Effective learning environment

All participants expressed a strong preference for continuing English in the flipped classrooms, finding the model more effective than conventional methods. They noted that the FCM positively impacted their English learning and expressed intent to use it to further improve their proficiency. Consequently, the theme of an effective learning environment emerged as a key finding in the study. One participant highlighted the effectiveness of the FCM as follows:

"I wish we had learned English in the flipped classes at middle and primary school. I have been studying English in conventional English classes for 6 years, but unfortunately, I could not achieve a noticeable success in learning English language. It was a waste of time. I want to continue learning English in the flipped classes, because it benefited me a lot in a short time." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 6, Female).

The participants emphasized numerous reasons for the efficacy of the FCM. One participant revealed an intense enthusiasm for expanding their learning English in a flipped classroom, appreciating its inventive approach and the advantages of incorporating technology into the learning environment:

"I want to continue learning English in the flipped classes, because it is more innovative and modern. Integrating technology into English classes help us learn more effectively. It is more motivating and interesting for me to use technology to learn." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 12, Male).

One participant even recommended that the MoNE promote the adoption of the FCM in public schools, citing the model's effectiveness and its potential to improve language education on a larger scale. He highlighted the broader and more comprehensive language learning experience provided by the FCM, noting its positive impact on his language skills development, especially in speaking. The participant's statements are as follows:

"Thanks to this model, I developed multiple language skills. During my time in middle school, English classes primarily focused on reading and writing. However, in the flipped English classes, I had the opportunity to enhance my speaking skills. As a result, I can now speak English much more fluently. I believe the Ministry of National Education should encourage public schools to adopt this model." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 5, Male).

The researcher observed that integrating technology into English classes was crucial to the perceived effectiveness of the FCM. The students recognized technology's role in enhancing their learning experiences, noting increased engagement and motivation. They regarded technology as a tool for dynamic and innovative learning.

Accessibility of Resources

The results showed that the FCM supports flexible and personalized learning by enabling the students to access materials at their convenience, fostering adaptable and self-directed learning. Consequently, accessibility of resources emerged as a significant theme. One participant commented:

"While we were watching the videos, we were taking notes in order to be prepared for the in-class time. We could watch videos anytime we wanted, depending on our own schedule. The summary of each lesson in the form PDF was also available on the Google Classroom. So, anytime we wanted, we could access all the materials related to English lesson." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 4, Female).

This accessibility allowed the students to review and revisit content as needed, enhancing their understanding. The students viewed the FCM positively compared to conventional face-to-face classes. For instance, one participant expressed her perceptions as follows:

"Before we started using the FCM in English classes, I did not have the chance to review lessons. I used to listen to the teacher in class to learn a topic, and that was it. However, in the flipped English classes, I can now watch a video again and again if I do not understand something." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 9, Female).

Similarly, the researcher noticed that in the flipped English class, the students were able to access instructional materials, such as pre-recorded video lectures, at their own pace. They could view course materials on Google Classroom anytime, allowing them to manage their learning independently.

Insufficient Preparation

In the study, some participants reported inadequate engagement with pre-class materials, such as videos and quizzes, leading to unpreparedness for in-class sessions. Consequently, insufficient preparation emerged as a significant theme. One participant explained his lack of completion of pre-class tasks. Initially, the participant doubted the usefulness of watching the pre-class videos, unsure of their contribution to his learning. However, his perspective changed when he realized that skipping these videos impeded his understanding of the subject.

"At first, I ignored the videos, thinking they wouldn't help me much. Later, I realized that skipping them made it hard to participate in activities during class time. I found that without watching the videos first, understanding the topics for English class was difficult.." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 12, Male).

Some participants offered various reasons for not being prepared for in-class time. Some noted that he occasionally missed watching the videos due to other commitments, such as homework, highlighting the difficulty of balancing multiple responsibilities. Others mentioned two reasons for not watching the videos: boredom with the format and time constraints. These factors such as balancing commitments, managing boredom, and time limitations affected the students' ability to consistently access resources in the FCM. Their comments are as follows:

"Sometimes I did not watch the videos, because I had homework to do and I could not find time to watch some videos." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 13, Male).

Some participants were well-prepared for in-class time but were disturbed by their classmates' lack of preparation. One participant experienced disruption and an inability to concentrate when his peers were unprepared during in-class activities. The participant's comment is as follows:

"Some of my classmates failed to watch the films at home before the in-class time. This posed a challenge for me, since their lack of understanding of the issue limited their capacity to participate in in-class activities and achieve satisfactory performance. Consequently, they broke their connection with the class and began discussing things unrelated to the subject matter. This troubled me, as I was unable to concentrate on the tasks during in-class time." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 5, Male).

The researcher observed that the participants had varied perceptions regarding the value of pre-class materials, especially videos. Even though the students were informed about pre-class tasks and assignments via WhatsApp and the weekly schedule on Google Classroom, some were not sufficiently attentive and often cited different reasons for not being prepared for in-class time.

Adjusting to the Flipped Classroom Model

In the study, adjusting to the FCM was a highly significant theme. Many participants initially reported difficulties transitioning from conventional studying methods to the FCM, posing a substantial challenge during the early weeks of implementation. This adaptation period was a significant obstacle to the model's successful execution. However, through developing new skills and sustained efforts, the participants eventually adapted to the model and reaped its benefits. One participant reflected on this adjustment process by stating:

"Initially, we encountered challenges in adapting to the flipped English lessons due to our conventional study habits. We were unable to organize our time efficiently to watch the videos before in-class time. Sometimes, we missed watching videos. At other times, we watched the videos without focusing. But a

few weeks later, we got new skills, including planning and time management. Ultimately, we succeeded in adjusting to the model." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 15, Male).

While some students struggled to adapt to the FCM due to limited self-regulation skills, others found it challenging because they preferred traditional face-to-face learning methods. One participant shared her thoughts on this:

"At first, I found it difficult to adapt to the FCM since we learned English by listening to the teacher in traditional classes. In the beginning, watching the videos at home in isolation, without direct interaction with the teacher, became somewhat difficult. However, after a few weeks, I adapted to it." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 3, Female).

It is important to note that pre-class tasks were just one of the reasons why shy students struggled to adjust to the FCM. Some students found it challenging to participate in collaborative tasks during in-class time because they were not accustomed to such activities due to their prior learning experiences in primary and middle school. One participant shared:

"At first, I faced difficulties participating in group activities in class due to my lack of experience with collaborative work in elementary and middle school. So I was anxious about speaking in English and engaging in these activities. Gradually, I developed confidence and became more relaxed with speaking English and participating in group activities." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 3, Female).

The researcher observed that students needed an adjustment period of about 3-4 weeks to adapt to the flipped English class model. Initially, some students resisted and were apprehensive about learning English through videos rather than direct teacher interaction. Besides the challenge of watching videos, the students also struggled with participating in collaborative in-class activities, such as role-plays and discussions, which were new to them due to their prior traditional learning experiences. This unfamiliarity led to anxiety and stress, as they feared making mistakes and being judged by their peers.

Internet Connection

Poor internet connection was identified as a significant barrier to the successful implementation of the FCM. Most participants reported that they faced challenges in downloading and watching lesson videos due to unreliable internet access, making it a prominent theme in the category of negative student perceptions. The participants shared specific difficulties they encountered with connectivity issues, which hindered their ability to fully engage with the model as follows:

"Because of poor internet connection, sometimes I could not download the videos." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 13, Male).

"Sometimes I had problems with downloading the videos because of poor internet connection." (Answered in Turkish, translated into English) (Participant 11, Male).

The researcher observed that poor internet connectivity led to delays in accessing essential resources needed for pre-class preparation. The students facing connectivity issues often showed signs of frustration, which hindered their engagement and interaction with peers and instructors during in-class activities.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study's findings align with several other studies in the existing literature, highlighting positive student perceptions of the FCM. The favorable perceptions reported in this study are consistent with results from various researchers, such as Mehring (2016), Hung (2015), Başal (2015), Webb and Doman (2020), Shahani et al. (2021), Ma and Luo (2022), Yakop et al. (2023) and, Han et al. (2023). These studies indicate that students generally have positive perceptions of flipped learning environments. Additionally, the study's results regarding student satisfaction with flipped learning are in line with findings from Ayçiçek and Yanpar-Yelken (2018) and Kırmızı and Kömeç (2020), suggesting that students are satisfied with the FCM in secondary school settings.

One significant advantage of the FCM highlighted by the study is its ability to save time for English language practice. By shifting content delivery outside of class through videos and other preparatory tasks, the model allows classroom time to be used for interactive, communicative, and collaborative activities, which enhances language skills. This result of the study is in line with the findings of the studies by Baker (2000); Başal (2015); Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018) and Özkurkudis and Bümen (2019).

The FCM also proposes solutions to common problems encountered in teaching English as a foreign language in public high schools, including restricted class hours, unmotivated students, boring course materials, and overcrowded classrooms. By encouraging independent engagement outside of class, the model optimizes in-class time for interactive and communicative language learning, addressing these practical challenges effectively.

The results of this study are also consistent with those of Kırmızı and Kömeç (2020) and Yakop et al. (2023) who found that the FCM significantly improved EFL learners' language skills, particularly in speaking and listening. This consistency with other research indicates that the model is effective in encouraging active learning and providing more chances for meaningful communication among students.

Another important finding is that the FCM promotes learner autonomy by encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their learning. In this study, students were responsible for independently viewing video lessons as part of their homework assignments, which empowered them to become more autonomous learners. The FCM also created an active learning environment where students participated in engaging, hands-on activities during class, fostering a dynamic and participatory learning atmosphere. The studies by Han (2015), Hung (2015) and Zainuddin and Perera (2019) reached similar conclusions, finding that the model encourages students to take more responsibility in a learner-centered environment, promoting greater autonomy in their learning.

The qualitative findings of the study indicate that the FCM is more engaging and enjoyable than traditional face-to-face classes, leading to higher levels of student enjoyment and motivation, particularly during in-class time. This does not imply that conventional classes are uninteresting, but rather that the FCM significantly enhances student enthusiasm and engagement. This finding is supported by the research showing that the FCM effectively engages students in active participation during classroom sessions (Mehring, 2016; Hung, 2015; Başal, 2015; Webb & Doman, 2020; Han et al., 2023).

The study concludes that the FCM aligns with constructivist learning theory principles by promoting both independent and collaborative learning. In constructivist settings, teachers assist students in generating new knowledge rooted in their existing cognitive frameworks. (Brown, 2014). This study provided a flipped learning environment that allowed students to construct knowledge based on their schemas. Additionally, consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on social interaction and cooperative learning, the study established cooperative and interactive learning

environments within the FCM, requiring students to engage in interactive activities during class sessions.

The FCM also offers a more flexible learning environment, allowing students to access educational content anytime and anywhere to meet their individual needs. The study found that students in the flipped classroom could learn outside the traditional classroom setting, taking advantage of technology to facilitate flexible learning options. At this point, this study aligns with the findings of previous research by Çavdar (2018), Webb and Doman (2020) and, Han et al. (2023).

Despite the positive perception of the FCM, the study highlights several challenges students may face, particularly related to preparation levels. As in this study, a lack of sufficient student preparation before in-class time has been highlighted as a concern in the study by Chen Hsieh et al. (2017). In this current study, the teacher-researcher encouraged pupils to take part in in- class activities in spite of initial challenges.

This success may be attributed to the strong study habits and self-discipline of students in a science high school, who are typically selected based on national exams and have above-average intelligence and self-regulation skills. However, students who lack self-regulation skills may struggle to adapt to the autonomous learning environment of the FCM (Rasheed et al., 2020). The model's success largely depends on students' readiness to take responsibility for their learning and develop self-regulated learning skills.

The process of adapting to the FCM was a key focus in the findings. Initially, some students expressed concerns about understanding the lesson material when watching videos at home without the immediate support of a teacher. Since this was their first experience with a learning model that emphasized their active involvement and introduced innovative methods, they encountered a new way of engaging in collaborative and interactive activities during class. Similar observations were made by Chou (2020) and Han et al. (2023), who noted that students faced initial challenges in adapting to the FCM.

The study suggests that implementing the FCM in all high schools in Türkiye may not be feasible due to the need for self-disciplined and autonomous learners who

can thrive in innovative learning environments. Therefore, it is recommended that students receive training in self-regulation skills and autonomous learning before introducing the model. With these skills, the FCM is expected to yield more favorable outcomes in achieving educational objectives.

To ensure the success of the FCM, it is essential for learners to be both willing and capable of taking responsibility for their learning and possess strong self-regulated learning skills. The effectiveness of the FCM can vary significantly depending on the characteristics and readiness of the student population, making it more suitable for certain high schools than others. This study, along with those conducted by Hao (2016) and Ma and Luo (2022), highlights the importance of educators considering students' personal traits, unique situations, interests, self-regulation abilities, and the learning environment to maximize the benefits of the FCM.

A key challenge in implementing the FCM is the significant role of teachers in facilitating the model effectively. Teachers are responsible for designing and preparing engaging instructional materials, including videos, readings, and online assignments that students interact with outside of class. In-class time is then focused on interactive and collaborative activities. This process requires considerable time, effort, and expertise from teachers, as highlighted in the study by Başal (2015). One of the most challenging aspects is creating high-quality, engaging instructional videos and assignments. Therefore, successful implementation of the FCM demands adequate training and support for teachers to help them develop the necessary skills and understanding of educational theories like constructivism and social constructivism. This conclusion is echoed in the research by Ayçiçek and Yanpar-Yelken (2018) and Başal (2015).

Finally, implementing the FCM in high schools, particularly in rural areas with inadequate or non-existent internet access or where students lack the necessary technological devices, poses significant challenges. Even in this study, technical issues such as unreliable internet connections created obstacles, despite the school's efforts to provide necessary resources. This highlights the need for infrastructure improvements and access to technology to fully realize the benefits of the FCM in diverse educational settings.

Implications

Taking into account the results of this study, more research on the FCM may be utilized in language instruction at the elementary and middle school levels as well as in various high school settings, including general (academic) schools and vocational schools, where there is currently little research. For language teachers, mastering the FCM is crucial, requiring thorough preparation, active student engagement, and adaptability. Teachers should create engaging instructional videos and guide students in effective self-regulated learning strategies, such as time management and note-taking, to ensure successful participation. Educational institutions, including the MoNE, should provide professional development opportunities, ensure access to necessary technological resources, and support both teachers and students in adapting to the flipped learning model. Additionally, the MoNE could assist teachers by offering high-quality instructional videos or training, facilitating broader adoption of the FCM in public schools.

Ethics Committee Permission Information

This research study was conducted with the Research Ethics Committee approval of Dokuz Eylül University, dated 19.07.2022 and numbered E-87347630-659-315316

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