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## Secondary School EFL Students' Perceptions of The Flipped Classroom in Terms of Autonomy, Language Skills, Technological Attitudes, and Motivation

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### Abstract

The current study was undertaken in order to investigate EFL students' perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of autonomy, language skills, technological attitudes and motivation at the secondary school level. The participants of the study were 113 high school students enrolled at a Turkish science high school. A mixed-method research design was adopted in the study. In order to collect quantitative data, a questionnaire was applied which included six sections: (1) *Participant Gender and Grade*; (2) *Flipped Classrooms and Autonomous Learning*; (3) *Flipped Classrooms and Language Skills*; (4) *Flipped Classrooms and Technological Attitudes*; (5) *Flipped Classrooms and Motivation*; and (6) *Advantages and Disadvantages of Flipped Classrooms, and Suggestions for Improvements* (open-ended questions). For the study's qualitative data, a semi-structured interview approach was employed. Both the questionnaire and the interviews were administered in Turkish, so as to prevent any miscomprehension problems by the participants. The study's results indicate that the participant students favor flipped classrooms, and that they generally held positive perceptions of flipped classrooms in terms of autonomy, language skills, technological attitudes, and motivation.

**Keywords:** Flipped classroom, mixed-method design, EFL students, evaluation of CALL, learner autonomy, technological attitudes, motivation.



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## Introduction

The increasing presence of technology in daily life has also necessitated its integration in education. Technology has become an indispensable part of everyday schooling, with digital learning materials and online learning having paved the way for a more personalized form of learning. Education is no longer confined to the physical school building, but has been made widely available anytime and anywhere. It follows that today's teachers and students are faced with having to adapt to these everchanging conditions in education. With the insurmountable volume of information now available at the students' fingertips, the teacher's role has also undergone a significant shift towards being a "guide on the side" from "sage on the stage" (King, 1993). Students are no longer just passive recipients or observers within the educational process, but have become active participants. They need to interact with each other, as well as with their teachers and with educational materials. In this way, students are required to "think for themselves, pose and solve problems, and generally produce knowledge rather than reproduce it" (King, 1993). This dynamic view of learning has come to be known as "learner-centered pedagogy."

The "flipped classroom" is a recent instructional model that offers a solution to the time constraints of learner-centered education through the application of digital technologies. It is an innovative instructional approach that inverts the traditional classroom by taking the lecture outside of the classroom, and moving activities, which are traditionally considered as homework, back into the classroom. In their book "*Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day*," Bergmann and Sams (2012) described the flipped classroom as a setting where that "which is traditionally done in class is now done at home, and that which is traditionally done as homework is now completed in class" (p. 13). Additionally, the Flipped Learning Network (2014) provided a more comprehensive definition, stating that the flipped classroom is;

*A pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.*

In the conventional classroom, teachers can only viably lecture about a topic once or twice, but in the flipped classroom students can watch the lesson videos as many times as they need. Having mastered the subject matter in advance, the students can then actively engage in the activities which are held in the classroom. This is considered to be a successful form of integrating technology into the educational environment, and without loss of the human touch. In this way, the teacher is always on hand to guide students as well as to inspire and motivate them.

A number of studies have shown that using online resources and technology can empower students in the learning process, and may lead them to become lifelong learners. Schmenk (2005) pointed out that "the popularity of learner autonomy may be at least partially related to the rise of computer technology and the growing importance of computers in language learning environments worldwide". Thus, the flipped classroom is expected to foster learner autonomy through its integration of technology and multimedia resources under the supervision of the teacher.

The literature offers a great deal of research regarding the implementation of flipped classrooms for various school-level subjects, including teaching English as a Foreign

Language (EFL). Most of these studies have been set within higher education institutions, both within Turkey and internationally. Thus, flipped learning is almost unknown in secondary education circles in Turkey, and is therefore worth a closer look to consider the potential implications for alternative means of delivering foreign language education in this age of technology.

The current study aims to gain insights into secondary school EFL students' perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of autonomy, language skills, motivation, and technological attitudes. In revealing students' perceptions, their unique point-of-view will enable a more thorough understanding of the potential impact of applying the flipped classroom approach in secondary education. The findings of the current study aims to not only contribute to the literature, but also it to address some of the key problems associated with English language teaching

### *Review of Studies*

The effectiveness or impact of the flipped classroom has been studied in relation to a wide range of variables, e.g., from language skills to motivation, and through various educational contexts ranging from the secondary school to tertiary level. A number of studies have also compared its effectiveness to traditional classroom practices.

Mason, Shuman, and Cook (2013) compared the effectiveness of a flipped and a traditional classroom based on an upper-division engineering course. Their results demonstrated that the instructor was able to cover more content in the flipped classroom. As for the students' performances on quizzes and exams, the students' results from the flipped classroom were found to be superior to those of the traditional classroom. Student perceptions of the flipped classroom were also measured through surveys and in-class discussions. Though the students initially needed some time to adjust to the flipped method of teaching and learning, most of them soon felt that "the flipped classroom was a better use of class time and that the format better prepared them for engineering practice". However, the instructor also observed that some students expressed frustration with the course structure, such as having to decide for themselves which videos they needed to watch. This desire for structure agreed with the findings of Strayer (2007). In this regard, Mason et al. (2013) suggested that instructors begin flipping their classrooms with some degree of structure and guidelines, which can then gradually be reduced and eventually removed.

Zhao and Ho (2014) evaluated the impact of flipping an undergraduate classroom-based history course using videos and resources from an online learning platform, additionally supplemented with in-class discussions and activities. They found no statistically significant differences between the traditional and the flipped classrooms in terms of the students' achievement test scores or grade point averages. A survey was also administered to learn the student perceptions of the flipped classroom. With regards to the main components of the flipped classroom, the majority of the students believed the online videos and reading material to have been of value to their learning. The students found the discussions to be effective since they refined and deepened their understanding of the concepts in the module content or in the text that they were required to read. Those students who preferred the traditional classroom method thought that class time should be used for lectures and that history courses should not be discussion-based. They also complained about the heavy workload of the flipped learning method. Zhao and Ho (2014) noted that it

was important to make sure that the students came to class properly prepared, so that they could actively participate in discussions and actively learn from each other. Therefore, they emphasized the role of assessment in order to keep students on track and suggested developing both online and in-class assessment tools to keep students focused.

Driven by the lack of adequate studies of flipped classrooms at the secondary schooling level, Winter (2018) set out to investigate the relationship between motivation and performance in a flipped sixth-grade social studies course based in a middle school in Hawaii. Following an 8-week study course, performance data was collected, and a survey consisting of Likert-type items was administered. The results indicated that technology-based content in the flipped classroom may lead to increased motivation and improved performance. The findings also suggested that flipped learning helped average achieving students through differentiated instruction.

Some researchers have looked into the flipping of foreign language classroom courses. Han (2015) tested the applicability of the flipped classroom to second language acquisition and its role in fostering learner autonomy. Han implemented a flipped classroom model within an adult community language program in the United States and observed a positive impact among the ESL students at the end of the program. Han concluded that “the model provides a platform for successful language learning and results in the significant development of learner autonomy” (2015).

In a longitudinal study, Bařal (2015) looked into the perceptions of prospective English language teachers towards the flipped classroom. The study lasted for two semesters during which preservice EFL teachers were exposed to flipped instruction. The results of the study demonstrated that the EFL preservice teachers had positive attitudes towards the use of the flipped classroom as an integral part of their face-to-face courses. In particular, Bařal’s (2015) study concluded that the flipped classroom provided a level of efficiency in four categories: *learning at one’s own pace*, *advance student preparation*, *overcoming the limitations of class time*, and *increasing participation in the classroom*. Another study on the flipped classroom and written in the Turkish context was conducted by Ekmekçi (2017). Based on the findings of that study, the experimental group’s students outperformed those from the control group following the treatment process, indicating the usefulness of the flipped classroom in terms of writing skill acquisition.

Ahmed (2016) studied the flipped classroom in terms of its effectiveness on writing skills in addition to students’ attitudes to the flipped method. The results of EFL writing showed that the experimental (flipped) group outperformed the control (traditional) group. In addition, a questionnaire was employed to reveal the attitudes of the experimental group prior to and following the flipped instruction. A statistically significant difference was found between the mean scores of the pretest and posttest questionnaires, which the researcher attributed to the flipping of the normally classroom-based course.

Alsowat (2016) sought to explore the effect of a suggested EFL Flipped Classroom Teaching Model on graduate students’ English higher-order thinking skills, engagement, and satisfaction. Throughout the study the experimental group outperformed the control group in overall English skills. The data analysis in the study revealed that the flipped model was effective in increasing the students’ foreign language higher-order thinking skills, engagement, and satisfaction. According to Alsowat (2016), “students are satisfied with the

idea of changing the traditional practices to a more autonomous learning that fulfills their needs and incorporates new technology in classroom”.

As for language skills and the flipped classroom approach, Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) studied the relation between flipped classrooms and listening comprehension. According to their results, the flipped classroom enhanced Cambodian pre-university students’ English listening skills. Moreover, the students’ attitude also turned positive with the flipped classroom. Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) concluded that “the flipped classroom generally helped learners to be independent learners, highly responsible for their own learning, yet it improved relationship between teacher-student and student-student”. In another study, Amiryousefi (2019) found that the flipped classroom method enhanced EFL learners speaking and listening skills at the tertiary level, and that their study’s participants were found to be more interested in using the materials.

Li and Suwanthep (2017) conducted a study on the integration of the flipped classroom model for EFL speech. The research involved two groups of non-English major students at a university in Thailand. The results showed that the experimental group received higher scores in the posttest than the control group, and that the majority of the students expressed positive views on the flipped classroom through both a questionnaire and interviews. Another study on oral production of EFL learners was conducted by Lin and Hwang (2018). The results of their study indicated positive outcomes for flipped instruction. It can therefore be suggested that flipped instruction can help to enhance students’ English language oral production.

Another study that aimed to explore the benefits of flipped learning for learners of English as a foreign language was carried out by Hsieh, Wu, and Marek (2016). In total, 48 sophomore English majors in two compulsory English language oral training classes participated in the study. The participants were taught English idioms through flipped learning, using the LINE smart phone application. The study’s results indicated that “flipped instruction using online written and oral interaction not only enhanced the participants’ motivation, making them more active in using idioms in class, but also significantly improved their idiomatic knowledge”.

In a more recent study by Haghighi, Jafarigohar, Khoshsima, and Vahdany (2018), the researchers focused on EFL learners’ appropriate usage of refusal, based on achievement, participation, and perception. They found that the students in the flipped classroom participated more in the course content and their performance outweighed those in the control group. The participants also stated that learning English through the flipped classroom approach was highly enjoyable. Similarly, Lee and Wallace (2017) also found that students in the flipped classroom achieved higher average scores compared to those in the non-flipped classroom. Moreover, they reported that the participants found the flipped classroom environment to be enjoyable and engaging.

The effects of flipped instruction on preservice English language teachers’ speaking skills development were examined in a study conducted by Köroğlu and Çakır (2017) at a state university in Turkey. While a flipped instruction-based syllabus was used to develop the speaking skills of the experimental group students, the control group received instruction based on the traditional classroom model. The data analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the posttest scores of the two groups with regard to different dimensions of speaking skills. It was found that the flipped instruction was effective in terms

of developing students' fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range, and accuracy and pronunciation.

Insightful experimental studies have been conducted on various instructional models. In one such study, Song and Kapur (2017) researched a comparison of two types of flipped design. One design was the "traditional flipped classroom" and the other was the "productive failure" design. In the "failure design," the students explored, discussed, and solved problems related to the new concepts first within the classroom environment, even though they might experience failure, and then they would watch conceptual video clips at home following the lesson. Their findings indicated that both groups made progress in terms of their procedural knowledge acquisition. The researchers also found that "productive failure-based flipped classroom" design seems to be better able to improve students' problem solving skills. In a study conducted in the Turkish context, Kurt (2017) found that the group taught with the flipped classroom method achieved better self-efficacy and better learning outcomes.

In relation to language skills, Wu et al. (2016) worked with 50 English-major sophomores in Taiwan, and found that the online learning group made progress in terms of meaningful and collaborative interaction. Their study also found that the participants in the experiment group improved in their oral language proficiency. In a more recent study conducted by Webb and Doman (2019), learners' attitudes regarding technology-enhanced language learning in the flipped classroom at the tertiary level were examined, and it was found that the flipped classroom approach for language learning had a positive influence on the attitudes, digital literacy, and anxiety of the learners. Also, Zainuddin and Perera (2019) found that the flipped classroom enabled students to become more competent in handling online tasks and activities and in controlling their learning outcomes. Their study went on to report that the flipped classroom setting fostered better peer interaction and autonomous learning skills, as well as contributing to the students' intrinsic motivation.

Finally, Akçayır and Akçayır (2018) conducted a systematic analysis of studies conducted on flipped classrooms. Their findings showed that the flipped classroom produced promising results in terms of *learner outcomes, pedagogical contributions, time efficiency, and interaction*.

The potential of flipped learning in learning English as a foreign language was voiced by Mehring (2016), who suggested that it enables the creation of a communicative and student-centered learning environment by means of varied tools employed in the flipped EFL classroom. Other researchers have also suggested that the flipped classroom can enhance peer-assisted learning, cooperative learning, active learning, group work, and in-class discussions, with students having been shown to be more active in the learning process and thereby building up their own knowledge and assuming responsibility for their learning (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Butt, 2014).

As can be seen, there have been a number of studies that have focused on the teaching of the English language in relation to the flipped classroom approach. Researchers have handled the issue from different angles. To the best knowledge of the researcher in the current study, there have been no studies published in the literature that have focused on the effect of flipped classrooms on EFL learners' autonomy, language skills, technological attitudes, and motivation at the secondary school level. Another significant point is that the flipped classroom is a student-centered model, grounded in the constructivist theory of

learning. As known, constructivism requires the active construction of knowledge by the learner as opposed to absorbing it passively, meaning that it is done by the learner. As such, terms like “collaboration,” “interaction,” and “engagement” are highly important in constructivism. In the flipped classroom, students work in to learn collaboratively. In addition, as stated by Adnan (2017), the advantages of flipped classroom encompass flexibility and ability to progress at one’s own pace, take on collaborative tasks in the classroom, more efficient use of classroom time, continuous access to course materials, and improving self-discipline and self-regulation skills. To conclude, there is still a considerable need to conduct research studies on the flipped classroom approach as a promising form of instructional design.

The questions that the current study seeks to answer are as follows:

- What are EFL students’ perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of learner autonomy?
- What are EFL students’ perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of language skills?
- What are EFL students’ perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of technological attitudes?
- What are EFL students’ perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of motivation?

## **Methodology**

This is a descriptive study which adopted a mixed-methods research approach. A number of prominent researchers have stressed and validated the viability of the mixed-method design in applied linguistics studies (e.g., Creswell, 2003; Dörnyei, 2007; Riazi, 2016; Riazi & Candlin, 2014). King and Mackay (2016), for example, legitimized the use of mixed-methods research by suggesting that the dynamic field of second language research can highly benefit from the rich data provided by mixed-methods research. Therefore, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, the current study aimed to ensure depth and clarity. A quantitative method was considered as the best means to collect data from a large sample of students, with students’ perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of autonomy, skills development, technological attitudes, and motivation gathered through the application of a questionnaire. Additionally, a qualitative method was considered useful for collecting data at the individual level, and was employed to find out, in depth, about EFL students’ flipped classroom experiences. Both the questionnaire and the interviews were administered in the participants’ native language (Turkish) in order to prevent any misunderstandings in comprehension.

### *Setting*

The study was conducted at a state science high school in Turkey, which provides education to exceptionally gifted mathematics and science students. In Turkey, 14-year-old students are admitted to this type of school after having receiving top scores in a competitive national placement exam taken at the end of their basic education (eighth grade). The school’s class size is limited to 34 students. Regardless of their actual level of English, students receive the same English instruction based on the national curriculum, beginning from the A1 level of CEFR and progressing up to the next level each school year. Therefore, the classrooms have a mixed level grouping in terms of the students’ English language proficiency, hence there exists a need for differentiated language instruction. The students are provided textbooks published by the Turkish Ministry of National Education.

The students at this school are mostly considered to be high achievers who study hard to receive high grades from all subjects as their grade point average will also be used at the end of their schooling in addition to their university national entrance exam scores. Graduates from this school mostly score well on the university entrance examinations, and students usually then enroll into medicine or engineering faculties at university.

### *Participants*

The study's sample consisted of 113 students enrolled at a state Science High School in Turkey. Of the 113 participants, 68 (60%) were female and 45 (40%) were male, and whilst 55 (49%) of the students were studying at Grade 11, 58 (51%) were at Grade 9. The 11th-graders received flipped instruction at level B1 for three semesters whilst the ninth-graders were taught in the flipped classroom at level A1 for one semester. Following the instruction period, the participant students were each asked to complete a questionnaire about their perceptions of the flipped classroom. After completion of the questionnaire, five students were selected for interview with the aim of revealing their individual perceptions of the flipped classroom. The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.** Participants' Profile by Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Female	60	68
Male	40	45
Total	100	113

**Table 2.** Participants' Profile by Grade

<i>Grade</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
9	51	58
11	49	55
Total	100	113

Based on the national curriculum, the ninth-grade students received English language instruction at the A1 level, whilst the 11th-grade students received English language instruction at the B1 level as specified by CEFR.

### *Instruments*

The instruments used to collect data in the current study were a Likert-type questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

### *Questionnaire*

The questionnaire used in the current study was aimed at investigating the participants' perceptions of flipped learning. It consisted of six sections: (1) *Participant Gender and Grade*; (2) *Flipped Classrooms and Autonomous Learning*; (3) *Flipped Classrooms and Language Skills*; (4) *Flipped Classrooms and Technological Attitudes*; (5) *Flipped Classrooms and Motivation*; and (6) *Advantages and Disadvantages of Flipped Classrooms, and Suggestions for Improvements* (open-ended questions). The questionnaire was prepared following an extensive review of the published literature. Each item was based on a five-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Both the questionnaire and the interviews were administered in the participant students' native language (Turkish) so as to prevent any instances of miscomprehension. The reliability analysis of the questionnaire was

conducted using IBM's SPSS analytical software, with the values of the items found to be as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
Autonomy	6	.855
Language Skills	5	.839
Technological Attitudes	6	.531
Motivation	5	.688

The reliability value of the six items on autonomy was found to be .855, whilst the five items on language skills showed a reliability value of .839. The reliability value of the six items on technological attitudes was .531, whilst the five items on motivation showed a reliability value of .688.

#### *Interview*

A semi structured interview was used to collect qualitative data in the current study. The interviews were conducted to explore the participants' perspectives on the flipped classroom in more detail. Five students were selected for and consented to be interviewed. Each interview was conducted face-to-face and were each digitally audio-recorded and then transcribed into written form. The interview participants were each selected randomly from the study sample.

Brinkmann (2012) stated that during interviews, study participants can become more conversational and thus provide more valuable and rich data. In a similar vein, Leavy (2017) suggested that the qualitative approaches can provide greater depth of meaning through revealing people's subjective experiences, which enables researchers to gain a more rigorous understanding of the topic of study. Another reason for the adoption of interviews as a method of data collection is that "the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, seen, spoken, heard and, indeed with online interviews, written" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 506).

#### *Procedure*

The implementation of the flipped classroom lasted for three semesters. As the teacher of the classes involved in the current study, the researcher created a YouTube channel through which the videos of the subject matter in the course syllabus were shared. Prior to the classes, the videos were uploaded to the channel and the students were instructed to watch them outside of the class in order to learn about the upcoming subject.

In the classroom, lessons usually started with a round-up of the subject conveyed in that week's video. At this stage, the teacher elicited the form and functions from the students and offered clarification or more examples if needed. The round-up sessions were sometimes alternated with quizzes that tested certain points of learning raised in the videos. In this way, it was aimed to ensure that the videos were being viewed by most or all of the students. Following this stage, the students were assigned collaborative tasks that required some form of (English) language production. These tasks generally involved role-plays, problem-solving and information-gap activities, written assignments, group presentations, and also discussions. The teacher monitored the students and assisted any that were struggling.

**Table 4.** Flipped Classroom Design Implemented in the Study

<i>Before-class assignments</i>	<i>In-class activities</i>
Video lectures	Question-answer round-up/quiz
Note-taking	Collaborative tasks
Close-ended practice exercises	Integrated-skills practice

The 11th-graders received flipped instruction for a total of three semesters, whilst the ninth-graders' English classes were flipped for one semester. The topics shown in the videos are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Topics Covered in Online Videos

<i>Video order</i>	<i>Student grade</i>	<i>Topic</i>
1	11	Narrative tenses
2	11	Conjunctions
3	11	Exclamations
4	11	Passive Voice
5	11	Present Perfect Simple and Continuous Tense
6	11	Book and Film Reviews
7	11	Past habits
8	11	Future Forms
9	9	Asking for and giving directions
10	9	Prepositions of place
11	9	Comparing things
12	9	Daily routines

Following the flipped instruction period, the students were requested to complete a questionnaire regarding their flipped learning experience. Following their completion of the questionnaire, five of the participating students were interviewed about their individual flipped classroom experiences.

#### *Data Analysis*

Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using IBM's Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics and independent sample *t*-test statistics were then used to analyze the Likert-type questionnaire items. General categories and sub-categories were identified in the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire's open-ended items and to the transcribed interview data. In order to analyze the interview data, content analysis was selected as the preferred method, which is extensively used in qualitative research in order to understand the meanings contained with textual and transcribed data (Leavy, 2017). Qualitative content analysis was defined by Roller and Lavrakas (2015) as "the systematic reduction...of content, analyzed with special attention to the context in which it was created, to identify themes and extract meaningful interpretations of data" (p. 232).

## **Findings**

### *Findings Related to Learner Autonomy*

Table 6 presents the findings of the study regarding learner autonomy. The students' responses to the first item concerning autonomy show that the majority agreed that they

became independent and self-sufficient language learners in the flipped classroom ( $M = 2.50$ ). As for the second and the third items, the students felt that the video lectures helped them arrive at class already prepared ( $M = 2.39$ ) and had control over their learning in terms of pace ( $M = 2.54$ ). The students also agreed that they were able to use the language that they learned from the videos during the in-class activities ( $M = 2.41$ ). As shown in Table 6, the students thought that flipped learning placed them in charge of their own learning ( $M = 2.56$ ) and boosted their confidence in their learning of the English language ( $M = 2.74$ ).

**Table 4.** Students' Perceptions of Flipped Classroom in Terms of Autonomous Learning

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
1. I can learn on my own by watching video lectures.	15.0	17	39.8	45	30.1	34	10.6	12	4.4	5	2.50
2. I can come to class prepared by watching video lectures.	13.3	15	51.3	58	24.8	28	4.4	5	6.2	7	2.39
3. I can learn at my own pace by watching video lectures.	8.8	10	49.6	56	25.7	29	10.6	12	5.3	6	2.54
4. I can use the knowledge that I learned from the videos in class activities.	13.3	15	48.7	55	26.5	30	7.1	8	4.4	5	2.41
5. Flipped method has put me in charge of my own learning.	10.7	12	46.9	53	25.9	29	7.1	8	8.9	10	2.56
6. Flipped method has boosted my confidence in learning English.	9.8	11	33.0	37	35.7	40	16.1	18	5.4	6	2.74

#### *Findings Regarding the Flipped Classroom and Language Skills Development*

Regarding the students' perceptions of language skills learning in a flipped classroom, the students were asked whether or not the method had improved their writing, speaking, listening, and reading skills, and their ability to use the English language communicatively. In Table 7, the students' responses indicate that they thought the method had enhanced all their language skills, with their listening skill being the most enhanced ( $M = 2.39$ ). It can be speculated that the video lectures they watched were extensively in English. Since the lectures were watched during the students' own time, there was more time available during the class hours to engage in hands-on activities, which might have helped to boost their language skills. In addition, 50.4% ( $n = 57$ ) of the students thought that their speaking skills in English had improved during their time learning under the flipped classroom model ( $M = 2.58$ ). As for the students' responses to Item 4, the results show that 52.2% ( $n = 59$ ) of

the students thought they could communicate better in English thanks to receiving flipped instruction ( $M = 2.69$ ). Likewise, the students agreed that the flipped instruction helped to develop their reading skills ( $M = 2.72$ ) and writing skills ( $M = 2.83$ ).

**Table 5.** Students' Perceptions of Flipped Classroom in Terms of Language Skills Development

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
1. My writing skills have improved thanks to flipped learning.	10.6	12	31.9	36	31.0	35	16.8	19	9.7	11	2.83
2. My speaking skills have improved thanks to flipped learning.	9.7	11	40.7	46	35.4	40	10.6	12	3.5	4	2.58
3. My listening skills have improved thanks to flipped learning.	16.8	19	43.4	49	29.2	33	5.3	6	5.3	6	2.39
4. I can use English communicatively thanks to flipped learning.	7.1	8	45.1	51	26.5	30	14.2	16	7.1	8	2.69
5. My reading skills have improved thanks to flipped learning.	9.7	11	38.9	44	29.2	33	14.2	16	8.0	9	2.72

#### *Findings Regarding the Flipped Classroom and Technological Attitudes*

As shown in Table 8, most of the students disagreed with the first item, which stated that a teacher's in-class lectures were not necessary to learn English ( $M = 3.66$ ). The students' responses to the second item indicate that the students did not prefer the content videos over their in-class lectures ( $M = 3.41$ ). Furthermore, most of the students expressed satisfaction with the usage of technology to learn English, as their responses to the third item show ( $M = 2.13$ ). As for the fourth item, most of the students considered that they knew how to use technology adequately in order to learn English ( $M = 2.90$ ). It can be understood from the students' responses to the fourth item that they preferred homework that required usage of the Internet and computers rather than traditional pen and paper-based homework. Hence, the students agreed with the last item, which stated that "it is necessary to use technology to learn English" ( $M = 1.68$ ). The results show that students valued in-class lectures over the content videos or video lectures. After all, in-class lectures prevail as the standard method of instruction in Turkish secondary school education, and it is acknowledged to be difficult to change pre-existing practices and attitudes. On the other hand, the students expressed wanting technology to be a part of their English instruction, believing that technology can be useful.

**Table 6.** Students' Perceptions of Flipped Classroom in Terms of Technological Attitudes

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
1. Teacher's in-class lectures are not necessary to learn English.	3.5	4	15.9	18	20.4	23	31.0	35	29.2	33	3.66
2. I prefer content videos to teacher's lectures in class.	7.1	8	16.8	19	24.8	28	31.0	35	20.4	23	3.41
3. I enjoyed learning English by using technology.	25.0	28	47.3	53	18.8	21	7.1	8	1.8	2	2.13
4. I know how to use technology to learn English.	12.5	14	31.2	35	22.3	25	21.4	24	12.5	14	2.90
5. I prefer homework that requires technology to homework that is done without technology.	25.9	29	33.0	37	18.8	21	16.1	18	6.2	7	2.44
6. It is necessary to use technology to learn English.	45.1	51	45.1	51	5.3	6	2.7	3	.9	1	1.68

#### *Findings Regarding the Flipped Classroom and Motivation*

The first item aimed to check whether or not the students found the in-class lectures boring, and 47.3% of the students ( $n = 53$ ) disagreed with this statement, showing that they generally have a tendency towards teacher-centered instruction, which is the norm in most Turkish secondary schools. As for the second item, 62.1% of the students ( $n = 69$ ) agreed that their motivation to take part during in-class activities increased when they learned about the subject from the video lectures in advance. Thus, advance learning was found to motivate the students to be active learners in the classroom. The majority of the students also agreed with the third item, which asked whether or not the integration of technology in the course had boosted their motivation to learn English ( $M = 2.44$ ). The fourth item asked if the students found the flipped classroom to be more motivating than the way they had previously learned English (traditional classroom) and 57.1% of them ( $n = 64$ ) agreed. Finally, most of the students responded positively to the last item, expressing overall satisfaction with the flipped classroom practice (see Table 9).

**Table 7.** Students' Perceptions of Flipped Classroom in Terms of Motivation

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
1. I think the teacher's in-class lectures are boring.	9.8	11	10.7	12	32.1	36	34.8	39	12.5	14	3.29
2. Coming to class prepared increased my motivation to participate in class activities.	17.1	19	45.0	50	29.7	33	5.4	6	2.7	3	2.32
3. Integration of technology has boosted my motivation to learn English.	13.4	15	46.4	52	25.9	29	11.6	13	2.7	3	2.44
4. Flipped classroom is generally more motivating than traditional classroom.	11.6	13	45.5	51	32.1	36	8.0	9	2.7	3	2.45
5. Flipped learning has had a positive influence on my motivation to learn English.	22.3	25	39.3	44	32.1	36	2.7	3	3.6	4	2.26

#### *Analysis of the Open-ended Questions*

The third section of the questionnaire included three open-ended questions:

- What do you think are the advantages of the flipped classroom?
- What do you think are the disadvantages of the flipped classroom?
- What are your suggestions to make the flipped classroom method more useful?

The findings that were obtained from the students' responses to the three open-ended questions are summarized in the following tables. First, Table 10 presents the advantages of the flipped classroom from the viewpoint of the participant students.

**Table 10.** Advantages of the Flipped Classroom

Codes and themes	n
Learning at one's own pace	22
Advance student preparation	18
Improving English-speaking skills	16
Overcoming limitations of class time	15
Fruitful integration of technology into education	8
More enjoyable than the traditional classroom	8
Higher participation in class activities	7
More motivating and engaging than the traditional classroom	6

<i>Codes and themes</i>	<i>n</i>
Visually appealing	5
Improving English reading and writing skills	4
Opportunity to catch up on missed classes	3
Learning on one's own	2

The first question was answered by 107 out of the 113 participating students. As can be seen from Table 10, the most reported advantage of the flipped classroom was seen as "learning at one's own pace" ( $n = 22$ ). The students mentioned being able to start and stop the videos at any point and watch the videos repeatedly where needed in order to reinforce their comprehension. In totals, 18 students thought that learning in advance and coming to class prepared was an advantage of the flipped classroom method. It was also reported that the flipped classroom improved the students English-speaking skills ( $n = 16$ ). For 15 of the students, being able to watch the videos wherever and whenever they wanted was seen as advantageous, which also allowed more time for practice in the classroom. According to eight students, subjects were easier to understand when technology was integrated into their lessons, and eight students found the flipped classroom to be more enjoyable than the way they were previously taught English. Seven of the students thought they participated more during in-class activities thanks to the flipped classroom approach. The flipped lessons were also found to be motivating and engaging ( $n = 6$ ), and five students found the video lectures to be visually appealing. According to four of the students, the flipped classroom method helped them to develop their reading and writing skills in English. Three of the students thought that catching up on lessons when they had missed classes was an advantage of the flipped classroom, and finally, two of the students thought it was advantageous to be able to learn on their own. Some excerpts of the students' views on this item include the following:

"I can watch the videos over and over."

"I can even watch the videos on the school bus."

"Now, we have more time for more enjoyable activities in class."

"I learn things on my own without having to wait for others in class."

"I can speak English better thanks to the new method."

According to the data obtained in response to the second question, Table 11 presents the disadvantages of the flipped classroom from the viewpoint of the students.

**Table 81.** Disadvantages of the Flipped Classroom

<i>Codes and themes</i>	<i>n</i>
There are no disadvantages	26
Watching video lectures is boring	20
Having a heavy workload	17
Having difficulty understanding English videos	15
Not being able to ask questions about the lecture immediately	13
Having no computers or Internet access	13
Becoming distracted by other online stuff	5

Out of the 108 students who answered the second question, 26 stated that there were no disadvantages to studying according to the flipped classroom method. However, 20 of the students found it boring to watch video lectures on their own, whilst 17 of the students

thought that the video lectures were an unnecessary burden because it was at school where lecturing should take place. In total, 15 of the students wrote that they had experienced difficulty in understanding the videos when the content was explained completely in English. Relatedly, 13 of the students thought that not being able to ask the teacher about confusing points immediately was considered a disadvantage of watching video lectures at home. Not having access to the Internet or to a computer was reported as a disadvantage of the flipped classroom for 13 of the students. Five students wrote that when they watched online videos, they easily became distracted by other items online. Some of the views of the students on this item are as follows:

“Learning from videos is not a good idea as school is the place where you learn things best.”

“We get bored when we have to watch video lectures.”

“As a boarding student, I have limited access to the Internet and computers. This can be a problem.”

“We can’t ask questions about the subject immediately.”

“It can be distracting when the videos are online.”

“I want to learn from my teacher in class rather than from a video on my own.”

From data collected to the third question, the students’ suggestions to improve the flipped learning process are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12.** Suggestions to Improve the Flipped Classroom

<i>Codes and themes</i>	<i>n</i>
Uploading videos more frequently	20
Uploading videos with subtitles	15
Creating interactive videos	14
Making funny videos	12
Varying the content and style of the videos	8
Watching the videos with the teacher in class	8
Watching videos as consolidation	7
Making video lectures in Turkish	3
Ministry of National Education should support flipped classroom practice	2
Putting an end to the flipped classroom practice	1

Out of the 113 respondents to this item, 81 provided their suggestions on making the flipped classroom better. In total, 20 of the students suggested uploading videos more frequently, whilst 15 thought it would be a good idea to add subtitles to the videos, and three of the students suggested using Turkish explanations to ease their understanding. Of the respondent students, 14 of them thought that adding interactive practice activities to the videos would make them more useful. Suggestions for using dialogue videos or short films in addition to the video lectures were mentioned by eight of the students, whilst 12 of the students recommended making funny videos. Eight of the students suggested watching the videos with the teacher in class so that they could seek clarification about the content if needed. Seven of the students suggested watching videos as a form of consolidation following on from in-class lectures. Two of the students suggested that the Ministry of National Education should provide free Internet access and support the flipped classroom applications. However, one of the students recommended putting an end to the flipped classroom application. Some of the students’ views of students on this item are as follows:

“Instead of boring lectures, we could watch funny videos of English dialogue or extracts from films.”

“We want videos more often.”

“We could watch the videos with our teacher in the classroom and then ask questions about the points we don’t understand.”

“We could have activities to do within the videos.”

“Explaining the subject in Turkish would be more useful.”

“By adding subtitles to the videos, you can make sure everybody understands the videos.”

### *Analysis of the Interviews*

Following the questionnaire, five students were interviewed by the researcher. The interviewees were selected on the basis of their willingness to share their personal experiences and opinions about their flipped classroom experience. Each had been used to the traditional classroom, so the flipped classroom was considered to be a whole new experience for each of them. A standardized open-ended interview was employed to ensure consistency and thoroughness (Turner, 2010). The participants were asked the same questions, which were open-ended, so that they could fully provide their own views and related experiences. The interviews were digitally audio-recorded and then later transcribed. By comparing the interview transcripts, the information was categorized, and common codes identified. These codes were *advance preparation*, *self-paced and self-directed learning*, *skills development*, *integration of technology*, and *heavy workload*. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in order to protect their anonymity.

#### *Advance Preparation*

Four of the interviewees emphasized the efficacy of learning about the subject matter prior to classes. Mert and Esra mentioned that having learned the subject matter in advance, they felt more confident in their lessons than they had previously been. On this, Esra said, “Before the flipped classroom, I failed to understand things fully in class. That’s why I rarely participated. I was afraid of making mistakes. Now I learn most things before class and I have more confidence during the activities.” Zeynep thought that learning in advance provided time for such tasks, saying that, “In my previous school, all we did in English class was study grammar rules and fill in the blanks. We never had time for different activities. Now we perform role-plays, make posters, play games, and listen to songs. It’s so much better.”

#### *Self-paced and Self-directed Learning*

This is a point on which all of the interviewees agreed. Mert said that he was usually distracted during lectures in the classroom, because they were always crowded. However, he watched the video lectures alone and was able to concentrate better, stating that:

In the classroom there are 30 people. They sometimes interrupt the teacher and I get distracted. When I’m watching videos, I’m alone and there are no distractions. Besides, I can watch the videos as many times as I want until I fully understand. [Mert]

Esra and Umut both enjoyed being able to learn whenever and wherever they wanted, and also found the videos to be useful for revision prior to their exams.

#### *Skills Development*

According to the interviewees, the skill that flipped learning helped to develop the most was listening comprehension. Mert believed that watching English videos was good practice for the development of listening skills, whilst both Zeynep and Esra stated that they developed their listening skills mostly thanks to the videos they watched, and Selma thought they learned pronunciation of some words from the videos, which may be useful when speaking.

#### *Integration of Technology*

All of the students interviewed referred to the integration of technology in the flipped classroom as a favorable aspect. Umut, for example, stated that: "I liked watching the videos because videos are more like real life. You can learn how English is really used. English is not just a course to study – you use it to communicate."

#### *Heavy Workload*

In response to this item the interviewees stressed two points: that their workload notably increased, and that they experienced difficulty adjusting to the new format. Mert, Esra, and Selma each referred to difficulties in allocating time and effort to their English homework, which was "watching the video lectures." Selma said, "I have no time to study English outside of school. I'm studying hard for my university entrance exam and English is not a priority for me." She also added that, "Learning should take place in the classroom by listening to the teacher's lectures. Therefore, we come to school. I have little time to spend on learning English on my own."

#### *Adjustment to Autonomous Learning*

The interviewees also stated that flipped learning could not replace the teacher, stating that it was nothing like hearing from the teacher in person. They believed that it was more convenient when the teacher provided classroom lectures about unfamiliar or complicated subjects.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The current study found that the participants generally had positive perceptions of the flipped classroom method in terms of autonomy, language skills, technological attitudes, and motivation.

#### *Discussion of the Findings Related to Autonomy*

The second section of the questionnaire aimed to reveal the students' perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of their autonomy. Both in the questionnaire and during their interviews, most of the participants agreed that they were able to learn independently from the video lecture content. A statistically significant difference was found to exist between the ninth-graders and 11th-graders in this respect with more ninth-graders thought that they could learn on their own thanks to the flipped classroom. This difference could be attributed to the 11th-graders' lack of interest and effort displayed towards learning English.

The majority of the participants also agreed that they could learn at their own pace in the flipped classroom. The students elaborated upon their views in this respect in both the final section of the questionnaire as well as during their interview. Some of the students noted that they were able to watch the videos over and over until they felt that they had learned the subject. Some of the students reported having not watched some of the videos

as they felt that they already knew the topic that it addressed. Some of the other students expressed satisfaction at not having to wait for students who they considered learned more slowly than themselves.

Self-paced learning was also among the findings of a study by Bařal (2015) on flipped English instruction. Similarly, in their study on the potential benefits of flipped learning, Davies, Dean, and Ball (2013) reached the conclusion that flipping learning allowed for more personalized instruction to the satisfaction of the students.

The students' responses to the third item in this section of the current study revealed that the students felt that they benefitted from the advance preparation video assignments they were provided. The ninth-graders agreed with this more than the 11th-graders did, and this was possibly due to their greater interest in learning English. Moreover, in the last section of the questionnaire as well as during the interviews, the participants expressed that they experienced improved performance and higher motivation thanks to advance preparation (watching pre-class video lectures). Most of them agreed that they were able to apply the knowledge they had gained from watching the videos during their subsequent in-class activities. Similarly, teachers who were interviewed in a study by Bajurny (2014) also observed increased student motivation and engagement in their flipped classrooms, whilst Bařal (2015) reported that the participants who received flipped instruction found advance (pre-class) preparation beneficial too.

As for perceptions of self-confidence in learning English, the participants responded positively. They agreed that the flipped classroom method helped to boost their confidence in learning English. Research has suggested that confidence is an essential attribute of autonomous language learners and, since it enables students to learn and communicate more independently, language teachers are advised to help learners develop confidence in language learning (Çakıcı, 2015).

Drawing on the results of the second section of the current study's questionnaire and the related interview responses, it could be said that the flipped classroom holds promise for promoting autonomy in EFL classes at the secondary education level.

According to the literature, developing learner autonomy is essential to ensure successful foreign language education. A plethora of studies have demonstrated that autonomous language learners are more likely to be successful (e.g., Chan, 2001; Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys, 2002; Cotterall, 1995, 1999; Dickinson, 1995; Holec, 1979/1981; Littlewood, 1999). In their meta-analysis, Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) came to the conclusion that the flipped classroom had the potential to enhance students' competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and thus increase both their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. However, many other studies have revealed that Turkish students lack autonomy and that this deficiency interferes with developing their English language skills (e.g., Büyükyavuz & İnal, 2008; Karabıyık, 2008; Koçak, 2003). The current study suggests that the flipped classroom can provide language teachers with the means to develop autonomy, which has also been observed by other researchers (Alsowat, 2016; Bajurny, 2014; Han, 2015; Zhao & Ho, 2014).

#### *Discussion of the Findings Related to Language Skills*

In the current study, an improvement in language skills was reported by the participant students, and particularly in their listening skills. This skills increase may have been due to

the students having frequently watched English language videos, which helped them to improve their listening comprehension.

The results of the current study also showed that the participant students were satisfied with having more time for hands-on in-class activities thanks to the affordances of the flipped learning method. These in-class tasks that the teacher assigned required the students' collaboration as well as meaningful and purposeful production of the target language. These activities enabled the students to put their knowledge into practice and to learn actively.

Analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that the ninth-graders and 11th-graders differed significantly in their perceptions of their language skills in the flipped classroom. The results showed that more of ninth-graders believed that their language skills had developed thanks to receiving their English language classes through flipped instruction. It may have been that the students received a greater number of hours of English language classes, which helped them to improve their skills. Additionally, the 11th-graders who participated in the interviews explained that they were mostly focused upon preparations for the university entrance exam and that they perhaps neglected their English language learning.

According to the students interviewed, their active participation in class was as a result of the advance learning that the videos provided (i.e., before-class assignments). The more actively that the students participated, the more their language skills developed. Confirmatory findings were also seen in the studies of other researchers who investigated flipped learning (Ahmed, 2016; Koroğlu & Çakır, 2017; Li & Suwanthep, 2017; Roth & Suppasetserree, 2016).

While traditional learning is linear and passive, flipped learning is dynamic and collaborative. It is possible that students would rather be active during classes than to passively listen to lectures. This was evident from the current study's participants who expressed appreciation for the hands-on tasks they completed in the classroom. The students reported that they enjoyed the flipped classroom more than the traditional classroom in which they felt that they hardly had time for communicative tasks.

Previous research findings in this area are consistent with the current study's results. In a study by Mason et al. (2013), students felt that "the flipped classroom was a better use of class time and that the format better prepared them for engineering practice".

#### *Discussion of the Findings Related to Technological Attitudes*

The participants of the current study reported positive perceptions of the flipped classroom in terms of their technological attitudes. They found the integration of technology to be motivating and useful, which is a consistent finding with the outcomes of previous research (Bajurny, 2014; Başal, 2015). The students in the current study enjoyed learning from videos whenever and wherever they wanted to watch them, and appreciated being able to learn at their own pace. Additionally, they viewed technology as an essential part of their learning English and, whilst they not only know how to use technology to learn English, they also enjoyed this form of integration.

The participants also thought that the advance preparation for class that the videos provided was beneficial, and that it helped to increase opportunities for hands-on learning in the classroom. Some of the students noted that the videos were also useful to help make up for any classes that they had missed. Moreover, there were students who re-watched the

videos for the purposes of revision prior to their exams. Some of the students even suggested that additional videos were added, shown more frequently and on a wider range of language instruction areas.

However, the results of the current study's questionnaire also demonstrated that the students valued their in-class lectures more than the pre-class content videos, having expressed a preference for in-class lectures. Although the "sage on the stage" approach has been challenged by many studies, traditional stand-and-deliver lectures are still considered the norm in Turkish secondary school education. Therefore, the students tend to hold the teacher responsible for imparting knowledge within the classroom environment. Replacing live lectures with video lectures is seen as a totally new concept for many Turkish students, and naturally they will need some time to get used to it.

The results revealed a significant difference between the female and male students on their perceptions of undertaking homework in the flipped classroom model. A greater number of the male students expressed a preference for homework completed using technology compared to their female peers. This finding may be related to the male students being more technologically oriented than the females, although this difference is considered likely to disappear in near future as, similar to most areas, female students are likely to close this gap soon.

Another significant difference was found between the ninth-graders and the 11th-graders in their attitudes towards using technology to learn English. The ninth-graders reportedly enjoyed the integration of technology in their learning of English more than the 11th-graders did. Similarly, they agreed more that "it was necessary to use technology to learn English." These differences may be attributed to the exam-oriented mindset of the 11th-graders who are starting to prepare for the national university entrance exams that the majority if not all will sit at the end of following academic year, hence they may care less about English language learning since it is not tested under the Turkish university entrance exams.

#### *Discussion of the Findings Related to Motivation*

It is well known that highly motivated learners are often more successful in academic terms, as they are more keen to persevere in order to accomplish their education-related goals. Therefore, motivating students towards learning is seen as one of the major concerns of educators. The results of the current study suggest that flipped learning can be considered as a means to achieving this end. In the current study, the participants reported finding the flipped classroom more motivating than the traditional classroom and that learning within the flipped classroom was more enjoyable.

The students also noted that they felt more motivated to participate within the in-class activities thanks to having arrived at classes already prepared. The advance preparation (i.e., watching lecture videos) increased the students' confidence and they reportedly participated more actively, which helped them to improve their language skills as well. Their usage of technology was considered to be another motivating aspect of their flipped learning experience, according to the students' statements. They mentioned having liked the easy and fast access to information afforded by the flipped method thanks to the content videos. Previous studies in this area also reported increased student motivation, satisfaction, and engagement in the flipped classroom (e.g., Bajurny, 2014; Bařal, 2015; Han, 2015).

## Implications and Recommendations

The current study mainly focused on the flipped classroom in terms of students' autonomy, language skills, technological attitudes, and motivation. One strength of the current study can be considered in that it was conducted over a three semester period, during which the participants were exposed to the flipped classroom model. A second strength of the study is that it focused on a flipped classroom application from the perspective of important constructs of students' autonomy, language skills, technological attitudes, and motivation.

These findings indicate that the flipped classroom can lead to mastery learning by allowing students to learn at their own pace; ensuring a solid construction of learning by focusing on mastering one topic before moving onto a more advanced one. In the present educational system in Turkey, this is hard to ensure due to practical issues such as overcrowded classrooms. In the traditional classroom, students who fall behind tend to fail throughout their education; however, by enabling students to learn at their own speed of learning acquisition this problem can be overcome and their learning personalized.

The flipped classroom model aims to make use of educational technologies and digital learning materials to deliver course content outside of the classroom. In comparison to coursebooks or worksheets, digital materials can help to make language materials more akin to real life. Through video or animations, they provide visual and auditory clues to support the students' understanding. Today's educators need to realize the potential of technology in education, as this is how today's 21st century learners want to interact with educational materials. Thanks to the current advanced technology available, personalized learning is now at the fingertips of both learners and educators.

In this respect, the flipped classroom model is also considered compatible with Turkey's "FATİH Project," a recent national reform endeavor to equip schools with educational technology equipment such as tablet computers and interactive whiteboards. Additionally, the FATİH Project also delivered "EBA" (Educational Communication Network), which is an online educational network launched by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. EBA hosts a number of multimedia materials which both teachers and students can freely access, providing a valuable set of resources for teachers who are considering flipping their lessons.

As for the role of the teacher in a flipped classroom, it may perhaps be considered more demanding than that of the traditional classroom (see: Reyna, 2015; Wanner & Palmer, 2015). In the flipped model, the teacher prepares useful content materials as well as engaging in-class activities. They also have to monitor and offer assistance to their students through assessment and the provision of classroom feedback. While technology provides ease of access to information, it is still ineffectual without the human touch.

While the efficacy of flipped teaching is evident in the current study's findings, certain challenges were also noted. Since the flipped classroom was a novel concept for the study's participants, some of the students found it hard to adapt to the different course format. They expressed a preference for the teacher's lectures in class, no matter how clearly the target structures were presented in the lecture videos or how engaging the in-class activities were. There were also some participant students who did not watch the assigned video-based homework, so their participation in the subsequent in-class activities was somewhat limited. Similar concerns with learning style and accountability have also been reported in the literature (Ash, 2012; Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Mason et al., 2013; Strayer, 2007).

Therefore, the flipped course format should be clearly communicated upfront to the students. Teachers should also be patient, as changing routines to this extent may take some time for students to adapt to. Hence, rather than flipping a whole course from the outset, teachers could consider flipping certain units to start with and then expand that over time. In addition, quizzes and engaging in-class activities related to the video-lecture content can be used in order to better motivate students to attend their classes fully prepared.

The exam-oriented education policy in Turkey poses an obstacle not only to flipped learning, but also to foreign language education in general. At the end of their high school education (K-12), students can opt to sit the national university entrance exams; however, these do not include English language tests. Students generally start preparation for the university entrance exams as from their 11th-grade. With their focus on science, math, and social studies, students tend to neglect English language learning. Some of the 11th-graders in the current study failed to watch the assigned videos before attending class and offered excuses such as being short of time and that English was not a priority for them. As a result, they lacked the background knowledge necessary to perform the in-class activities. An overview of the video content delivered by the teacher at the beginning of the class served to prepare them somewhat for the activities, as well as other solutions also developed in order to tackle this problem. Since they were only interested in the achievement of high grades, the assessment was aligned with the flipped tasks. The students were given quizzes about the video content as a way to hold them accountable for watching the videos prior to attending class. Similar actions can also be taken to ensure the smooth running of the learning process in the flipped classroom.

One limitation of the current study was that the participants were selected according to convenience sampling. However, for effective experimental research, the randomness of participant selection is considered essential. Moreover, the current study reached a number of conclusions regarding the viability of the flipped classroom, and emphasized that the participants were seen as being motivated towards the flipped classroom model. However, caution must be taken in generalizing the findings of the current study, since it was conducted with a rather smaller number of participants and was not conducted according to a true experimental design. In future studies, more rigid experimental designs could be adopted.

In light of the current study's findings, it can be concluded that the flipped classroom empowers students for autonomous, personalized, and active learning. Students can interact with digital materials outside of the classroom, as well as interact with their peers and the teacher during in-class activities. Students can also benefit from the freedom to explore on their own, as well as under the guidance of their teacher; in essence, students can learn by doing, rather than by sitting passively.

In searching for effective language teaching models, the flipped classroom seems deserving of further exploration. Clearly, more research is required in order to assess the potential of this teaching method and to introduce it to a wider number of English language teachers in Turkey. The perceptions of the language teachers regarding the flipped classroom model could also be sought, and the results taken into consideration when devising future educational models.

In summary, the current study postulates important implications for instructional delivery and learning in the 21st-century. Today, usage of the Internet and mobile

technological devices is known to fill a large part of teenagers' lives, so it seems only natural and logical that they will prefer to learn in the same way. After all, instructional methods should evolve to suit the changing needs and ways of the learners.

## Notes

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