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## **Using the Flipped Classroom to Enhance Adult EFL Learners' Speaking Skills**

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### **Abstract**

The flipped classroom model (FCM) is considered to be one of the most noteworthy current discussions in education. Positive effects of FCM have been recently discussed, but literature provides few empirical clues about whether FCM can actually enhance adult English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' oral proficiency. The researcher utilized FCM and Output-driven/Input-enabled model (Wen, 2008) in order to explore the advantages of FCM in terms of improving speaking skills. A pre- and post-test quasi-experimental design was utilized to examine the impact of FCM on speaking skills. The sample consisted of 22 non-English major voluntary academicians from different departments of a Turkish state university. There were 11 learners in class A (study group) where the course was flipped while the rest were in class B (control group) in which the courses were conducted in the traditional way. The researcher applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods and used multiple sources of data collection, including a speaking rubric, the teachers' in-class observations, two sets of questionnaires ("Satisfaction of FCM Experience" and "Opinions of Speaking"), and semi-structured focus-group interviews. Findings revealed that the use of flipped learning approach not only enhanced the

speaking skill, but also increased learners' motivation and satisfaction with FCM. The results can be considered a reference point while designing oral skills in EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** Foreign Language Speaking; Flipped Classroom; Oral proficiency; Output-Driven/Input-Enabled Hypothesis; Adult Learners

## **Introduction**

Successful foreign language learning and teaching requires exposure to communicative practices because development of communicative competence is prerequisite for learning a language. Oral proficiency is a must for communication of ideas and intelligent conversation in a foreign language (hereafter, FL) (Folse, 2006). Unlike English as a second language (ESL) learners, EFL learners are generally taught or exposed to English in classrooms with limited class time and typically large class sizes (Tulung, 2008), so speaking is a complicated skill to learn and to teach in EFL contexts. Thus, various pedagogical approaches need to be applied to enhance learners' oral proficiency in EFL classrooms. Traditional classes are criticized for damaging learners' communicative competence due to inadequate interaction and dominance of teachers (McLean, 2012) and limiting learners' ability to appropriately initiate individual learning and oral performance. Roehl, Reddy and Shannon (2013) indicate that the traditional methodology does not fulfil learners' needs. In this respect, equipping speaking classrooms with technology allows language learners to be more active, autonomous, and productive in technological society (Bushweller, 2011; Davis, 2011).

The flipped classroom model (FCM) refers to using technology to foster learning both in and out of the classroom, and is also known as the reversed instruction, inverted classroom, and blended learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). It helps learners pause, rewind or review lectures, and it contributes to teacher availability and individualized learning (Schultz, Duffield, Rasmussen & Wageman, 2014). Nguyen (2014) suggests FCM for

language classrooms and teachers as it promotes learners' motivation, autonomy, and learning achievement. In traditional teaching, courses are conducted in classrooms and learners try to deal with the assigned homework sometimes in a "private hell of frustration and confusion" (Goodwin & Miller, 2013, p.78). In other words, in-class time is used for content while homework is applied for practicing subjects taught. Therefore, FCM has occurred as an alternative to the traditional view of instruction.

It is beneficial to adapt FCM into EFL classrooms as students are exposed to input mostly during the classroom hours. In Turkey, for example, English is a compulsory subject to be taught starting from 2nd grade (age 7) and it continues throughout students' educational lives. However, the English oral proficiency is not at the desired level. This has led to various reforms (such as 1997, 2006, and 2012) in Turkey with the aim of developing learners' oral proficiency as well as raising the quality of English teaching (Kırkgöz, 2007). Despite these reforms, being able to communicate in English is still a questionable issue. Therefore, researchers have focused on the effect of FCM to overcome such problems (e.g., Kırmızı & Kömeç, 2019; Öztürk, 2018) as it is considered to provide assistance in spending in-class time for learning, discovering, applying, evaluating, and creating (e.g., Hung, 2015).

In Turkey, being an academic staff member or enrolling in a PhD program requires at least 55 of 100 from YDS (Foreign Language Examination), which equals to 66 on TOEFL – IBT or A2 level of CEFR (Assessment, Selection and Placement Center [ÖSYM], 2013). It consists of 80 multiple choice questions and focuses on learners' reading skills, vocabulary and grammar knowledge but cannot assess productive skills. Therefore, a large number of academicians does not speak in English. Thus, this study aimed at examining whether FCM would affect learners' speaking skills and whether it changed learners' opinions towards EFL speaking. Another goal was to display advantages and disadvantages of FCM regarding EFL speaking. To achieve these goals, the researcher asked three research questions:

- 1) What are the adult EFL learners' opinions about their English oral proficiency?
- 2) To what extent does the integration of FCM affect adult EFL learners' oral proficiency?
- 3) What are the adult EFL learners' opinions about the integration of FCM in speaking lessons?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Skill Acquisition Theory, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Output-Driven/Input-Enabled Hypothesis were applied as theoretical framework.

#### ***Skill Acquisition Theory***

Skill Acquisition Theory explains how individuals progress in gaining various skills, including cognitive as well as psychomotor skills and advocates that adults begin learning a new thing through largely explicit processes, and move into implicit processes with adequate practice and exposure (DeKeyser, 2015). The first stage refers to declarative knowledge (acquiring vocabulary and grammar). Second is procedural knowledge (using knowledge to produce sentences in the target language through associating language elements into larger chunks). That is, declarative knowledge is proceduralized. In the current study, the researcher helped learners acquire knowledge about chunks and topics for speaking skills through texts and videos. Then, learners turned this knowledge into behaviour during the classroom time.

The scientific roots of this theory can be found in different branches of psychology, including constructivism (Dekeyser & Criado, 2013). Constructivism asserts that knowledge is not mechanically acquired; instead learners actively and purposefully construct the knowledge in regard to their experiences (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). Therefore, with the aim of helping adult learners acquire procedural knowledge, the current researcher adopted the underlying principles of constructivism to teach speaking via in-class activities. Learners should be given meaningful activities or tasks to interact with others in the target language and teachers

can test students' actual developmental level to help them gain new understandings.

### ***Bloom's Taxonomy***

The revised taxonomy is an educational framework, which is utilized to identify the effects of teaching and learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). Learners carry out the lower levels at home, while doing the higher forms in class (Brame, 2013). In a teacher-centred class, learners acquire facts rather than deep concepts due to teachers' dominance and control over their learners (Koch, 2016), so learning remains in the lowest levels (remembering, understanding, and applying) of Bloom's taxonomy. The researcher focused on higher-levels (analyzing, evaluating, creating) in classroom hours since learners covered lower levels thinking skills owing to online texts and videos provided in advance. For this reason, the researcher devoted priceless class times with learners since they were involved in tasks that call for higher-level skills, which promote deeper learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2014).

### ***Output-Driven/Input-Enabled Hypothesis***

This hypothesis underlines the crucial role of language output (Ren, 2017). Unlike the traditional instructional approaches for language learning, input is a means of accomplishing productive activities in this hypothesis and begins instructing with language production and ends with production (Wen, 2018). It has two assertions. First, concerning teaching process, output is stronger than input in promoting English learning. Second, regarding teaching objective, it satisfies social needs to place output as goal of language learning.

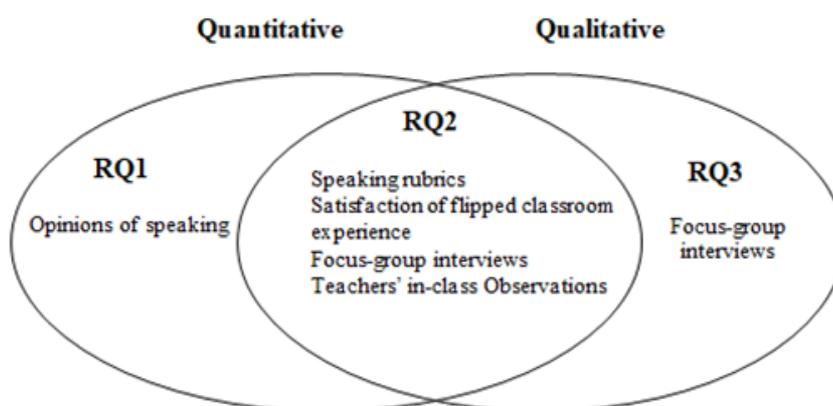
Wen asserts four teaching hypotheses regarding the output-driven/input-enabled hypothesis: output drive, input enable, selective learning and appraisal. This theory includes three core processes based on teacher's mediator: the driver, the enabler, and the evaluation. The first refers to the teacher's designing specific tasks to alert students' desire for knowledge and the

teacher's driving the learning. The second underlines the importance of instructing students "to conduct targeted learning on the content of the course, supervise and encourage the completion of the output task" (Jiang, 2019, p.520). Finally, the evaluation process can be both immediate and time delay, including various evaluation methods (e.g., teacher evaluation, teacher-student co-evaluation).

## Method

### *Research Design*

Both quantitative and qualitative paradigms were applied. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is necessary to understand the research phenomenon well (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007) and to benefit from the strengths of each tradition of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). Figure 1 presents the relationship between research questions and the related paradigms together with data collection tools.



**Figure 1.** Research questions, related paradigms and data collection tools

### *Participants*

Twenty-two adult EFL learners (15 males, 7 females) were recruited to two groups: traditional and flipped. Each consisted of purposefully selected 11 non-English major academicians (see Table 1). Although they had different titles (e.g., assistant professor, research assistant, instructor) and worked in different

faculties, as mentioned before, they shared similar language proficiency. None of them could express themselves fluently in English. They participated the study voluntarily with the aim of improving their speaking skills. The average age of them was 33.

**Table 1:** Demographic features of the participants

		Traditional	Flipped
Gender	Male	8	7
	Female	3	4
Title	Assistant Professor	4	3
	Research Assistant	3	6
	Instructor	4	2
Faculty of Education		5	6
Faculty of Science and Letters		3	2
Faculty of Engineering and Architecture		2	2
Health High School		1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

### ***Research Context and Procedure***

This study was conducted with academicians who were working in a Turkish state university during the 2018-2019 academic year, as part of two Practical English courses. The classes lasted 17 weeks with 2 hours per week, were taught by the researcher, and had the same goals: to develop academicians' English oral proficiency on the given topics. In order to recruit participants, the researcher declared the purpose of the practical English classes. The salient criterion was having at least 55 points from YDS. Thus, they would have enough grammatical knowledge to read and understand written materials. At first, there were 51 applicants from different departments. However, only 22 participants remained after determining the class dates. The sample was divided randomly into two classes (Traditional and Flipped). As YDS cannot gauge productive skills, learners' speaking skills were also assessed by two assistant professors

before and after the intervention through the IELTS speaking module.

Participants' YDS scores ranged between 55 and 67,5. The researcher used materials that were at A2 or B1 of CEFR in order to select materials that fits learners' language proficiency (ÖSYM, 2013), and he chose them from BBC (British Council, n.d.). Each material had (1) a lesson plan, (2) reading passages with substantial vocabulary, idioms, phrasal verbs, and phrases useful for the topic, and (3) exercises and tasks. There were two class hours per week. Despite having the same amount of learning time, different time arrangements and instructional methods were applied for both classes (see Table 2).

**Table 2:** Time arrangements and instructional methods

Traditional classroom			Flipped classroom		
Activities	Time*	Method*	Activities	Time	Method
Warm-up	10	F2F	Homework (Vocabulary & Grammar)	30	online
Vocabulary & Grammar	30	F2F	Warm-up	10	F2F
Exercises on Vocabulary and Grammar	25	F2F	Remedial Teaching	10	F2F
Speaking (Question- and Answer Drills)	20	F2F	Exercises on Vocabulary and Grammar	25	F2F
Wrap-up	5	F2F	Speaking	40	F2F
Homework (Quizzes)	30	online	Wrap-up	5	F2F

\* Time Unit: Minute; F2F= Face to Face

Both flipped and traditional classes had Edmodo account (<https://www.edmodo.com/>). The traditional class used this account for receiving and sending quizzes as homework while the flipped class used it to follow the written and visual materials. Both classes were provided with the same materials (see Table 3).

**Table 3:** Weekly course structure – traditional and flipped sections

Week	Traditional		Flipped		
1	Introduction to Course, Syllabus & Course Structure				
2	Pre-test of oral proficiency				
	In-Class	After-Class	Topic	Before-Class	In-Class
3	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Asking someone out on a date	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
4	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Planning an excursion	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
5	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Hotel Booking	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
6	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Changing ideas of beauty	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
7	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Get to know the neighbours	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
8	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Returning goods to a shop	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
9	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Photographs	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
	<i>Focus-group interview (one day later)</i>				
10	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Charities	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
11	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Technology	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
12	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Mobile Phones	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
14	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Consumer society	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
15	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Cycling	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
16	Instruction, Exercises & Speaking	Homework (Quizzes)	Big numbers!	Instruction (texts & Video Lecture)	Exercises & Speaking
	<i>Focus-group interview (one day later)</i>				
17	Post-test of oral proficiency				

### **Traditional classroom**

The instruction was conducted conventionally, where the teacher performed course materials mostly for one class hour, followed by class activities such as completing dialogues, talking about the topics, and doing role plays based on activities. Due to

lack of time, most of the activities were assigned as homework. The learners in traditional classroom used Edmodo for uploading their homework.

### ***Flipped classroom***

Learners were asked to watch videos and read texts before attending class. The teacher used Edmodo to share videos and texts serving as equivalent to lessons given in traditional classroom. The students in both the traditional and flipped were provided with the same class materials, activities and drills. However, as the flipped learners were told watch and read the materials and complete the worksheets before class, the whole in-class time was allocated to the activities such as completing dialogues, talking about the topics, and doing role plays based on activities. The instructor used the first 10 minutes for warm-up, another 10 minutes for checking the guided worksheets and clarifying questions about them, and the remaining time for aforementioned activities.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Various data sources were used, such as speaking rubric, teachers' in-class observations, Satisfaction of FC Experience questionnaire, Opinions of Speaking questionnaire, and semi-structured focus-group interviews. In addition, both quantitative (SPSS) and qualitative (content analysis) techniques were applied for analysing the data.

### ***Speaking Rubric***

Due to impracticalness of holistic assessment in terms of diagnosing strengths and weaknesses of learners in detail (Luoma, 2004), the researcher adapted an analytic weighted speaking rubric from similar studies (Abdelmageed & El-Naggar, 2018; Latifa, Rahman, Hamra, Jabu & Nur, 2015). The aim was to determine the EFL academicians' speaking level. The total score on the speaking rubric was 20. It had five sections (fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehensibility). This

rubric was used to assess learners' both initial and final performance. Considering inter-rater reliability, the participants' performances were graded by two raters (the researcher and an assistant professor in the field of English language teaching). Krippendorff's alpha was utilized for inter-rater reliability and found to be .80, indicating a reasonable reliability ratio (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). The learners received a speaking proficiency test adapted by the researcher based on the criteria of the IELTS. Thereupon, the IELTS speaking module was applied for all materials and tasks. The speaking proficiency test lasted 8–11 minutes per learner and included three tasks: warm-up questions, individual talk, and discussion. The difference between flipped and traditional instruction was compared through participants' pre- and post-test scores, which were analysed via the SPSS 21 statistical analysis program.

### ***Teachers' In-Class Observations***

The researcher (also instructor in this study) aimed to examine how flipped and control groups differ in terms of learner interaction and learners' use of language throughout the process. To achieve that goal, he observed both classes during the whole process (before, while and after instructions). As the main purpose was to focus on lectures, the researcher did not use a structured observation, but noted all the salient changes via Teacher's Observation Form per week so that he could observe the type and rate of developments in both classes. The data of the observation form was utilized to support both quantitative and qualitative data. For example, it helped the researcher observe whether there were mismatches between learners' views and actions.

### ***Satisfaction of Flipped Classroom Experience Questionnaire***

At the end of this instructional intervention, flipped learners were asked to respond to a 17-item satisfaction questionnaire adapted from similar studies (Hung, 2015; Öztürk, 2018) to gauge their learning satisfaction with FCM. The questionnaire consisted

of 16 close-ended questions and one metaphor sentence. The first part included sixteen close-ended questions that required participants to put a tick (√) to one of three option (1- Yes, 2- No, 3- Sometimes). The second part had a metaphor sentence which tried to display their satisfaction level of the online texts and videos.

### ***Opinions of Speaking Questionnaire***

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher with the aim of collecting data about the learners' opinions towards speaking English. It involved 14 Likert-type statements adapted from similar studies (Derakhshan, Khalili & Beheshti, 2016; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). To ensure content validity, two instructors of the Practical English courses (they were teaching speaking in English to senior learners) were requested to revise the items. The questionnaire was applied to the flipped class both at the beginning and at the end of the study to examine whether the integration of FCM changed their opinions about the speaking. The mean scores of the questionnaire were used to display academicians' opinions.

### ***Semi-Structured Focus-Group Interviews***

Focus-group interviews help examine discussions of the participants all together (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Thus, the researcher conducted two focus group interviews (in the middle and at the end of the intervention). The first interview lasted 35 minutes while the second was 45 minutes. The primary focus was on whether participants were happy with the implementation of FCM and whether their oral abilities were positively influenced by FCM. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. It is the researcher (not computer) who analysed qualitative data while computer just designed data (Merriam, 1998, p.167), so data were manually analysed. Dörnyei's (2007) coding stages were considered; a) transcribing, (b) pre-coding/coding, (c) growing ideas, and (d) interpreting the data and drawing conclusions (p. 246). After the coding process, the researcher e-mailed the same

transcriptions to an independent expert in the field of Measurement and Evaluation and requested him to label the transcriptions. The interrater reliability was found to be satisfactory (94) as it exceeded the threshold value (90%) (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## Findings

Findings were presented under the related research questions.

### ***Opinions of the adult EFL learners about Their English speaking skills***

The first research question aimed to explain the adult EFL learners' opinions about their speaking skills. The participants were asked to mark 14 statements from totally disagree to totally agree (corresponding to 1 to 5 respectively). Table 4 presents the mean scores for each item:

**Table 4:** Adult EFL learners' opinions about speaking

Survey Items	Mean	
	pre	post
1. Online sources help me get additional practice to enhance speaking.	2.90	3.81
2. It is difficult to master English speaking.	2.81	3.18
3. I am not satisfied with my speaking.	3.54	2.54
4. My English speaking has improved recently	2.81	4.00
5. I feel that I am currently good at speaking skills.	2.72	3.27
6. I have problems expressing myself fluently in English	3.81	2.09
7. The teacher is a model for speaking in the classroom.	2.90	3.72
8. I feel shy when speaking English.	3.27	2.72
9. I do not care much when I make mistakes while speaking.	2.72	3.54
10. For me, intelligibility is important while speaking.	3.81	3.90
11. Speaking is generally neglected in classrooms.	3.45	2.54
12. Speaking can be practiced outside the class for improvement.	3.27	4.63
13. My goal is to strive for being a native-like speaker.	1.54	1.90
14. Speaking should be taught separately, not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing.	2.81	2.81

The flipped learners were requested to rate the statements to learn whether the integration of FCM influenced their opinions of speaking. The mean scores display the strength of their agreement. As it is shown in Table 4, according to adult EFL learners, FCM not only enhanced their speaking but also helped them overcome their negative feelings towards speaking.

***The effect of FCM on the development of adult EFL learners' speaking skills***

In order to discuss whether FCM contributed to adult EFL learners' speaking skills, the first step was to assess their speaking before and after the intervention.

**Table 5:** Results of independent samples t-test

	N	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference																																																																																																																																										
Pre_Fluency	11	Control	1.8182	.40452	.244	20	.810	.04545																																																																																																																																										
	11	Study	1.7727	.46710					Pre_Pronunciation	11	Control	1.9545	.41560	.728	20	.475	.13636	11	Study	1.8182	.46221	Pre_Vocabulary	11	Control	1.8864	.34212	-.796	20	.436	-.15909	11	Study	2.0455	.56809	Pre_Grammar	11	Control	1.9318	.31802	-.123	20	.903	-.02273	11	Study	1.9545	.52223	Pre_Comprehension	11	Control	1.7273	.51786	-.197	20	.846	-.04545	11	Study	1.7727	.56408	Pre_Overall	11	Control	9.3182	1.50454	-.054	20	.958	-.04545	11	Study	9.3636	2.35681	Post_Fluency	11	Control	2.0455	.40028	-2.971	20	.008	-.56818	11	Study	2.6136	.49198	Post_Pronunciation	11	Control	2.1136	.49198	-1.114	20	.278	-.27273	11	Study	2.3864	.64579	Post_Vocabulary	11	Control	2.2955	.36773	-3.939	20	.001	-.65909	11	Study	2.9545	.41560	Post_Grammar	11	Control	2.2500	.29580	-2.417	20	.025	-.43182	11	Study	2.6818	.51346	Post_Comprehension	11	Control	1.9091	.47792	-2.448	20	.024	-.59091	11	Study	2.5000	.64226	Post_Overall	11	Control	10.6136	1.56670	-2.914	20	.009
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Regarding Table 5, t-Test was administered to find whether there was a significant difference between control and study groups. Although before the intervention no significant difference was found to be between control and study groups  $p = .958$  ( $p > .05$ ), considering the overall scores, after the intervention there was a significant difference  $p = .009$  ( $p < .05$ ). However, no significant difference was found for pronunciation  $p = .278$  ( $p > .05$ ). These results showed that the implementation of FCM enhanced learners' speaking skills but did not contribute to learners' pronunciation.

To examine if FCM influenced adult learners positively, a satisfaction questionnaire was applied to flipped learners at the end of the intervention (please see table 5).

**Table 6:** Frequencies of learners' satisfaction

	Yes	No	Sometimes
1. Did you watch the video lectures before coming to practice class?	7	2	2
2. Did you read the texts before coming to practice class?	9	-	2
3. Was accessing the video lectures easy for you?	11	-	-
4. Were the lengths of the video lectures appropriate and optimal?	11	-	-
5. Were the video lectures helpful and beneficial?	11	-	-
6. Did you review the texts and videos again just before coming to the class?	6	-	5
7. Did you spend more and efficient time in class for practicing thanks to the texts and videos?	9	-	2
8. Did communication and cooperation increase in class thanks to the texts and videos?	11	-	-
9. Were the texts and videos clear and understandable?	6	-	5
10. Did you have any difficulty in understanding the topics in the texts and videos?	-	2	9
11. Did you get bored or unfocused due to the durations of the texts and videos?	-	5	6
12. Did you do better academically in the flipped classroom model?	8	-	3
13. Did the flipped classroom model help you concentrate more when compared to the traditional lectures?	8	-	3
14. Did you study for the course more flexibly thanks to the video lectures?	7	-	4
15. Would you like English speaking courses to be conducted in flipped classroom model?	9	2	-
16. Did you observe any positive changes in your attitudes towards the flipped classroom model experience?	8	2	1

As it is shown in Table 6, except two items (10 and 11), the learners expressed their satisfaction for all items. The majority of the participants found topics difficult and boring especially due to their durations, so they could not focus on the topics appropriately.

The last item of the satisfaction questionnaire was a metaphor sentence. Based on their FCM-related descriptions, it was aimed to reveal whether the learners were satisfied with the intervention or not. Some examples were as follows:

*Watching video lessons was like medicine because its effect was not understood at the first time, but over time.* (Suna)

*Watching video lessons was like watching a documentary because it could be both boring and instructive.* (Fuat)

*Watching video lessons was like homework, because I would be unprepared unless watching them. (Efe)*

### ***The adult EFL learners' opinions about the integration of FCM in speaking lessons***

The last research question aimed to reveal how the integration of FCM in speaking lessons affected the participants. Data indicated that this implementation had not only advantages but also disadvantages. The pros were *input/output/interaction-rich instruction, personalization of instruction, development of higher-order skills, accessibility, and awareness and confidence* while the cons were *time consuming, learners not doing assignments, and not appealing to everyone*.

#### ***Input/output/interaction-rich instruction***

Unlike the traditional classroom, in flipped learning, the class time was devoted to practice, which maximized the exposure to comprehensive input and opportunities for output. Flipped classroom lets participants receive pre-class input which provides opportunities to utilize the whole class time to practice their speaking skills. This leads to the occurrence of interaction as it encourages learners to learn how to speak from each other with the guidance of the teacher. Here are some representative excerpts from the focus group interviews:

*In traditional teaching, teachers talk about the subject during the class hours. In order to acquire the knowledge, you should attend the course and not miss the lesson. The classroom is the sole and vital place to be exposed to input. But thanks to flipped learning, I can re-watch and re-read the subject until I feel myself confident. (Arzu)*

*It made us study the course before coming to class. The class time was devoted to activities. Thus, there was a plenty of time for speaking. (Ali)*

### ***Personalization of instruction***

Traditional teaching requires completing homework at home, so it is difficult to consider each of the learners' needs. However, learners are required to prepare lessons at home in FCM, while carrying out activities in class. This contributes to personalization of such activities. In addition, the teacher has ample time to provide scaffolded and personalized help to the most struggling learners.

*I did not feel alone in class; instead, I received assistance from the teacher who always scaffolded me. (Efe)*

*I need more time to comprehend certain issues. Studying lectures and texts at home gave freedom to learn at our own pace. We were fully responsible for organizing our own learning process. This learning helped me take my time reviewing the material until I understood. (Yusuf)*

### ***Development of higher-order skills***

Participants favoured FCM as it provides opportunity to do lower skills (e.g., remembering or understanding) at home, while allowing learners to do higher-order skills (evaluating, creating etc.) in class.

*We did all memory-based knowledge at home through materials that the teacher shared. This made me feel confident because I spent the class time to put that knowledge into meaningful practice. (Deniz)*

*We did all difficult activities (e.g., creating a new dialogue, performing argumentative talks) in classroom under the guidance of the teacher. This really helped improved my speaking. (Ahmet)*

### ***Accessibility***

Thanks to the availability of video lectures and texts at all times online, learners who missed class due to various reasons such as sickness, emergencies or travel, can have a chance to access the same materials and information. This also enables teachers to compensate the lessons they missed.

*Last week, I was ill and could not attend the lesson. However, I am still current with my work owing to online lessons. (Asmin)*

*It allows an individual, who could not concentrate during the lesson, to catch up the missing points because it is not limited to class time. (Kemal)*

### **Awareness and Confidence**

A few participants underlined the advantage of being aware of the subjects in advance. This contributed to their preparedness; therefore, they gained self-confidence:

*Having learned about the subject in advance motivated me more towards the lesson. (Çınar)*

*Having the chance to watch the videos and read texts several times before the class time was a big opportunity. Thus, we joined the lesson preparedly and felt confident. (Galip)*

### **Time Consuming**

Some participants complained that they spent too much time to cover the materials. Here is an excerpt:

*I watched the videos (sometimes with subtitles in Turkish). I was focusing on the pronunciations. I was trying to translate the texts with my colleagues. However, I think that the effort we spent did not present the desired efficiency. (Efe)*

### **Learners not doing assignments**

The flipped classrooms are dependent on learner participation. The teacher has to trust learners to do assignments at home because it is not possible to ensure their cooperation with FCM. That is, it requires a mutual trust between the teacher and learners.

*Sometimes, I could not watch and read the materials appropriately. When the teacher expressed his dissatisfaction with my performance, I did not confess my unpreparedness. Instead, I gave the difficulty of the tasks as an excuse. (Fuat)*

***Not appealing to everyone***

One participant seemed to be prone to traditional instruction although he confirmed the positive influence of FCM on his speaking. He stated that although the videos and texts let him cover the lesson as many times as needed, sometimes he needed someone to ask some questions related to topics in order to see the point.

*It was a way I hadn't experienced before, and I personally believe in its usefulness. Yet, I prefer face-to-face instruction because I need immediate feedback when I have trouble with the subject. (Deniz)*

**Discussion**

The first research question aimed to explain the adult EFL learners' opinions about their speaking skills. They stated that FCM not only enhanced their speaking but also decreased their negative feelings towards speaking. These findings confirm studies which show the positive contributions of FCM to FL learners' oral performance (Amiryousefi, 2017; Chen Hsieh, Wu & Marek, 2017; Li, 2016). For example, Amiryousefi (2017) investigated the impact of FCM on language learners' speaking and listening skills, and findings indicated that the method influenced language learners' learning process of EFL in a positive manner. Likewise, Chen Hsieh et al. (2017) stated that FCM not only made learners to feel less nervous, but also increased their motivation and activeness in class. Investigating learners' satisfaction towards the integration of FCM in college oral English teaching, Li (2016) found that most students were satisfied with the application.

The second research question examined whether FCM contributed to the development of adult EFL learners' oral proficiency. The teachers' in-class observations confirmed both quantitative and qualitative findings, emphasizing that flipped learners performed considerably better on the post-tests and that flipping the classroom not only enhanced learners' FL speaking but also created positive changes in their attitudes towards FCM experience. These results were compatible with previous research

(e.g., Çetin Köroğlu & Çakır, 2017; Kırmızı & Kömeç, 2019; Wang, An & Wright, 2018; Wu, Hsieh & Yang, 2017). Çetin Köroğlu and Çakır (2017) examined whether FCM could develop English language student teachers' speaking skills. They found a significant development in grammar, coherence, accuracy, and fluency skills of the flipped group. The data gathered from focus group interviews of this study support the principles of the skill acquisition theory, indicating that learners acquired knowledge through largely explicit processes, and then adequate practice and exposure helped them move into implicit processes.

Unlike the findings found by Kırmızı and Kömeç (2019) who believed that FCM improved students' pronunciation thanks to videos, the implementation of FCM did not contribute to learners' pronunciation in this study. The possible reason for this situation may be the fact that EFL learners were not aware of the listening strategies. In another study, Wang et al. (2018) investigated whether FCM could affect Chinese adult learners' L2 speaking. They found an enhancement in learners' L2 oral proficiency. Wu et al. (2017) created an online learning community in a flipped classroom to examine its impact on Taiwanese EFL learners' oral proficiency and their perceptions. They observed both a significant increase in participants' oral proficiency and a positive collaboration among them. This may be owing to the constructivist learning environment, in which learners can construct knowledge of FL speaking through the active interaction with their peers.

The last research question aimed to reveal the adult EFL learners' opinions about the integration of FCM in speaking lessons. They stated that the integration of FCM in speaking lessons has both advantages (*input/output/interaction-rich instruction, personalization of instruction, development of higher-order skills, accessibility, and awareness and confidence*) and disadvantages (*time consuming, learners not doing assignments, and not appealing to everyone*). Due to the time constraints of language classes, learners may not receive sufficient input, output, and interaction in traditional instruction (Spino & Trego,

2015). With FCM, teachers may “leverage technology to increase interaction with students” (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, p. 25). Therefore, learners have plenty of time for in-class speaking activities. Like Correa (2015), the result of this study found FCM lead to input/output/interaction-rich instruction. FCM fosters individual learning by allowing learners to follow lectures and read texts at home. Watching and reading materials in advance and being able to rewind videos until they master the subject helps language learners study according to their own pace (Li, 2015). For example, if the learners find the lesson too slow, they have a chance to watch the lessons at double speed if they want (Correa, 2015). Thus, it can be concluded that FCM helps learners develop higher order thinking, be engaged in learning, and become more independent learners, who learn at their own-pace.

In a teacher-centred learning, lower levels of cognitive work happen through lessons in a classroom, which has a limited class time for higher levels of cognitive work. However, in FCM, the constructivist theory is obvious as learners are responsible for their own learning, so Bloom's taxonomy is reversed. Learners do the lowest levels (remembering, understanding, and applying) at home through various activities, such as watching video, listening to audios or at least reading the texts (Alsowat, 2016). In the classroom, teachers help learners analyse, evaluate and create the information that is allocated to them. The current system does not welcome the learner who does not come to class for any excused absence (e.g., sickness, travel). It requires the practitioners to arrange an appointment with the learner so that what was missed can be covered. However, thanks to the flipped classroom, those who missed the class for any reasons find the same opportunity to follow the same instruction and to access the same materials. Thus, as long as learners find a chance for more practice (in or outside the class), their learning, one absence will not significantly affect their learning (Correa, 2015). Watching videos provides advantages of being prepared for the class in advance; thus, learners feel confident since they are aware of the content of lessons. In other words, they come to class with considerable

knowledge of the topic which increases their participation in the lesson (Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

On the other side of the coin, some participants complained about the amount of time they had spent in front of the screen. This confirms the study conducted by Young, Bailey, Guptill, Thorp and Thomas (2014) in which participants indicated that watching videos took their most valuable time. Just as learners are expected to do homework in the traditional instruction, they are required to watch videos and read texts at home in FCM. Regardless of the instructional approach, it is possible to have learners who come to class without doing their assignments (Correa, 2015). However, unlike the traditional instruction, it is not so easy for a teacher to ensure whether learners did their assignments. Thus, there should be a mutual trust between teacher and learner. Although FCM can provide several benefits (for example, learner-centred learning, motivation, free classroom time), some learners may not prefer flipped learning due to individual differences. It is not always possible to teach some materials and topics in a one-way video because of their complex nature. As Zappe, Leicht, Messner, Litzinger and Lee (2009, p. 2) stated, some lectures should be maintained traditionally, instead of flipping them.

## **Conclusion**

The present study aimed to examine the effect of FCM-based lectures on oral proficiency of non-English major academicians, reveal whether the integration of FCM could affect their opinions towards learning FL speaking skills, and display the advantages and disadvantages of FCM in terms of FL speaking. According to the results, the integration of FCM enhanced adult learners' oral proficiency and changed their opinions towards FL speaking in a positive manner. Self-directed and collaborative pre-course tasks as well as in-class activities increased their satisfaction of FCM, motivated them to be more engaged and encouraged them to be more active in speaking activities.

Considering adults' social needs, Wen (2008) noted that real life communication generally occurs via productive activities (i.e. speaking) followed by receptive activities (i.e. listening). Thus, enhancing learners' productive skills and receptive skills should remain as the ultimate goal of adult learning in English. While doing language output tasks, adults will become aware of the deficiency in their linguistic repertoire, which provokes adults to operate related input materials with more salient care so that learners could gain new information about the language, concerning language form and content. Therefore, the act of language production may improve learning and help adults notice what they are (or not) able to perform with the target language, which then causes adult learners to re-evaluate their FL capacity and to learn new information (Ren, 2017).

Considering the findings and discussions of the present research, the researcher recommends the following suggestions for practice.

- It is possible to effectively implement FCM to teaching and learning FL speaking courses. Such educational implementation enabled learners to be active, motivated and engaged in speaking tasks, therefore developing their speaking skills.
- It is vital for learners to perform FCM activities outside of class. To ensure learners do assignments prior to class time, practitioners must know how to monitor learners' development during the whole process.
- Learners become more engaged in the process if the content of the materials appeals to their interest. Thus, practitioners must ask for learners' opinions while deciding the videos and texts.
- Interaction-based activities and materials need to be provided to learners with the aim of helping them receives feedback outside of the classroom.
- As not all learners liked flipped classroom, students can be asked to write a response to the textbook and video lecture. Based on their responses, the theoretical basis

for using flipped learning can be explained in order to arouse their motivation.

The research, however, has various limitations. First, the sample was small, as it consisted of 22 non-English major academicians. For that reason, a large-scale replication is required, for generalization concern. The second shortcoming was about the quantity of the courses, at there were only two hours per week. Although a 17-week course seems to be reasonable, further studies may include at least four hours a week so that a more comprehensible results could be found out. Last but not least, future research might examine how learners of different proficiency levels benefit from FCM-based speaking courses.

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