



Investigating the Attitudes of M. A. Candidates of TEFL Toward Flipped-Teaching: A Mixed-methods Study

Hamed Zarabi*¹, Nima Yamrali¹, Nadia Gharani¹

¹Department of English, Gonbad Kavoods Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gonbad Kavoods, Iran.

Email: nima.y@icloud.com

Email: nadia.gh1998@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author's Email: Hamedzarabi97@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Flipped classroom is a new approach where teachers provide students with learning materials before the physical class. Lately, there has been a focus on its potential benefits, however, there is insufficient research on the perspective of TEFL Master's students toward this type of learning. To address this, 30 M.A. candidates of TEFL from the Islamic Azad University in Gonbad Kavoods, Iran, were randomly selected, with ages ranging from 24 to 52. The flipped method of instruction was used for a full academic semester. Data were collected using a mixed-method approach, including a questionnaire assessing students' attitudes toward flipped learning and interviews. Questionnaire frequency analyses showed that the students viewed flipped learning favorably and agreed that it benefited them in various ways. Furthermore, the interview content analysis indicated that the participants had a positive attitude towards the experiment and demonstrated that flipped teaching can lead to problem-solving outside the classroom, collaboration with the instructor and classmates, a sense of being valued, and predictability of lessons, which can reduce stress. Flipped teaching is a valuable investment of time and energy for both the teacher and learners in preparation for the classroom, as it can motivate and engage learners.

KEYWORDS: Attitudes; Flipped-classroom; Flipped-learning; Flipped-teaching

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of any instructional activity is to facilitate learning. As a result, educational experts and teachers have been exploring effective teaching methods that can ensure learners' effective acquisition of knowledge over the years. Flipped learning or inverted learning is a relatively new approach that promises to enhance learners' understanding and engagement in the subject matter (Anjomshoaa et al., 2022; Bond, 2020; Jiang et al., 2022; Ngo & Yunus, 2021). According to the recent publications, flipped learning has the potential to promote more effective learning outcomes (Birgili et al., 2021; Cho et al., 2021; Halasa et al., 2020; Paramita et al., 2023; Park & Kim, 2022; Parra-González et al., 2020; Strelan et al., 2020a, 2020b; Vitta & Al-Hoorie, 2023; Zheng et al., 2020). The concept of flipped learning dates back to 2007 when Bergmann and Sams created PowerPoint presentations to teach chemistry at Woodland Park High School. They uploaded these presentations to the network so that students could access them to make up for missed lessons. Bergmann and Sams (2012) believe that flipped learning can be applied to teach various subjects, including math, science, social studies, language arts, physical education, ELL, foreign languages, and humanities. Muzyka and Luker (2016) assert that flipped learning is a contemporary version of the ancient Socratic



method that aims to engage students actively in answering instructors' questions, which helps them to establish connections between ideas. They also use King's (1993) terminology to describe flipped teaching as 'guiding on the side' compared to traditional approaches where the teacher is 'the sage on the stage.'

Incorporating technology into traditional classroom settings to overcome the limitations and shortcomings of conventional teaching methods is the essence of blended learning, of which flipped learning is a prime example (Almufarreh & Arshad, 2023; Haleem et al., 2022; Reidsema, Kavanagh, Hadgraft, & Smith, 2017; Sofi-Karim et al., 2023). Flipped learning, as highlighted by Kim et al. (2018), is a student-centered approach that allows teachers and students to personalize their education (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Cevikbas & Kaiser, 2022; Lu et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2020; Tang, 2023). In the traditional classroom, learners are given lectures and expected to review and practice what they have learned at home; however, flipped learning reverses this order of activities (El Sadik & Al Abdulmonem, 2021; Hew et al., 2020). Here, the teacher records lectures, prepares podcasts, PowerPoint presentations, or screencasts, and shares them with the learners before they come to class. Students are expected to study these materials at home and come prepared for the class (Hidayah & Mustadi, 2021; Mojtahedi et al., 2020; Yumusak, 2020). This way, the presentation stage of teaching is shifted to outside the classroom, and the time in class is dedicated to practice and activities that reinforce learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Hung, 2015). It is difficult to mention all the requirements of a flipped classroom (Wilson, 2023); nonetheless, it is important to note that while technology is a crucial aspect of flipped learning, it is not a prerequisite. Students can be asked to read a chapter from a book before coming to class, and the class can still be flipped (Muffett, 2014).

In the inverted classroom, pupils have the freedom to study at any place, anytime, and at their own pace (Fructuoso et al., 2022; Gustian et al., 2023; Mittal Bishnoi, 2020). They have the option to view the videos as many times as they wish, and they can stop, rewind, or replay the content as they desire (Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2017). As a result, the classroom becomes more adaptable, and interactive learning is incorporated. Additionally, class time can be utilized for activities like problem-solving, discussions, personalized instruction, and other tasks that facilitate learning. This is because, as Reidsema et al. (2017) assert, decades of sound research indicate that interactive learning is a more effective means of developing conceptual understanding and knowledge. The flipped classroom is characterized by learners' autonomy and their active involvement in the learning process (Barrios et al., 2022; Colomo-Magaña et al., 2020; Espada et al., 2020; Gómez-García et al., 2020; Santos & Serpa, 2020), but it requires a highly motivated teacher who is willing to allocate significant time to prepare materials for learners to succeed (Kim, 2017). Furthermore, students must be self-driven and accountable for their own learning (Muffett, 2014).

In theory, active learning supports flipped learning by engaging students in hands-on activities and encouraging them to reflect on their actions (Bonnell & Eison, 1991, as cited in Hung, 2015). A key benefit of the flipped classroom is that it facilitates learners' cognitive processes by allowing them to first engage with lower-level thinking (Meyliana et al., 2021), such as knowledge and comprehension according to Bloom's taxonomy, before class and then activating their higher levels of cognition (Hwang et al., 2023). This approach then enables learners to progress to higher-order thinking, such as application and analysis, with the guidance and support of the teacher during class time, where the teacher can monitor their progress and provide assistance (Hung, 2015; Muffett, 2014).

Despite the fact that flipped learning can be used at any educational level, numerous global inquiries have been conducted in higher education settings, whereas in Iran, research on flipped learning has primarily centered on secondary education. As far as the authors are aware, no research has been conducted to investigate the attitudes of M. A. TEFL students towards the flipped approach to teaching and learning in the Iranian context. Consequently, the primary aim of the researchers in this study was to explore the perspectives of M. A. TEFL students on flipped learning.



REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although flipped learning is gaining more recognition, there has been insufficient research to comprehensively investigate the concept and methodologies used to implement it. Additionally, the theoretical foundations that could support and clarify the apparent effectiveness of this approach have not been thoroughly explored. This paper aims to bridge this gap by demonstrating the connection between learning theories and flipped learning and illustrating how the various elements of these theories are put into practice.

FLIPPED-LEARNING AND BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

Bloom formulated a theory of education that is often illustrated as a pyramid with different levels of learning. This is typically known as "Bloom's taxonomy." The framework can be used as a perspective from which to observe the different phases of learning. Lorin Anderson revised the process of learning from knowledge acquisition to critical thinking exercises in the 1990s. This updated version of Bloom's Taxonomy is pertinent to flipped learning because information transmission, which is the foundation of learning, is acquired independently and outside of class, while the absorption of information, which necessitates more critical reasoning, takes place during class under the guidance of a teacher or mentor. The higher the level represented on the pyramid, the more assimilation is required, while the lower the level, the more transmission of information occurs somewhat independently but not fully without assimilation. The middle areas may demand a more balanced or less skewed combination of the two. Talbert (2012) emphasized the idea of describing flipped learning in terms of assimilation and transmission.

Although Bloom's classification is useful for illustrating the phases of education and the nature of learning that arises at each phase, it fails to provide optimal techniques for achieving mastery at each level in a particular setting. Flipped learning has the advantage of providing students with active assistance and support during activities that necessitate more advanced cognitive processing, as it pertains to Bloom's taxonomy. Other frameworks and principles, such as Bloom's Mastery Learning, Cognitive Constructivism, and Social Constructivism, elucidate how learning takes place at different levels, as described by Bloom's Taxonomy.

Truly, the majority of investigations conducted on the flipped classroom utilize collaborative learning tasks within the classroom, founded on educational theories centered on the learner and established on the research of Piaget (1967) and Vygotsky (1930-1934/1978). Furthermore, the flipped learning methodology is well-suited for the Mastery Model, as presented by Bloom (1968) and explicated by Block and Anderson (1975), which also displays some correlation to the research of Skinner and operational conditioning.

FLIPPED-LEARNING AND CONSTRUCTIVIST VIEWS

Vygotsky perceived learning as a procedure that transpires when a student is supported by others who possess greater proficiency in the abilities being acquired. He also believed that learning is enhanced by cooperation within the student's zone of proximal development. Vygotsky (1978) characterizes the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as "the gap between the actual developmental level ascertained through independent problem solving and the potential developmental level established through problem-solving under the guidance of an adult or in partnership with more capable peers". In other words, learning happens when a student collaborates with a more knowledgeable adult or peer to solve problems that are slightly above their existing capabilities. Therefore, when utilizing the flipped classroom approach, students are given problem-solving assignments where they must apply the knowledge they obtained from watching the video outside of the classroom. To tackle these assignments, students may work alone or in teams under the supervision of the teacher.



Studies indicate that students acquire knowledge most effectively when they are taught in a manner that aligns with their individual learning styles, whether it be dependent, collaborative, or independent. Piaget's theory of cognitive development proposes that learners are akin to scientists attempting to comprehend the world around them. Rather than simply being presented with information to be immediately grasped and utilized, learners must "construct" their own knowledge through experience. Through experiences, learners create schemas or mental models in their minds, which are then modified, expanded, and refined through two complementary processes known as assimilation and accommodation. According to the Piagetian cognitive constructivist theory, in order to progress to a higher level of learning, students must engage with their peers in a process driven by "cognitive conflict" to achieve a better understanding of the knowledge at hand.

The flipped classroom employs the fundamental concepts of cognitive constructivism. One of these concepts is that learning is a dynamic process. To facilitate this, the teacher provides the students with a video before class that outlines the information that needs to be acquired. This information serves as a catalyst for problem-solving and is a useful tool that promotes and eases the learning process.

In 2008, Gannod conducted research to explore the implementation of the flipped classroom model in a software engineering course. The students were provided with 65 podcasts and the class time was devoted to collaborative learning, where they worked together to develop, assess, and assess software. The classroom activities were designed to encourage students to work in pairs or groups and apply the knowledge gained from the videos to solve actual problems. The approach used in the study aligns with the principles of Vygotskian learning.

Lage, Platt and Treglia (2000) conducted research to examine the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model in teaching economics. They developed various classroom exercises and group activities, which were supervised by the instructor, to conduct economic experiments. The students brought their own perspectives to the tasks and collaborated with each other to comprehend new information through continuous assimilation and accommodation. The study's findings indicated that students had a favorable view of this approach.

FLIPPED-LEARNING AND THE CONCEPT OF MASTERY LEARNING

Benjamin Bloom made Mastery Learning famous during the 1960s. Rather than being a theory that endorses flipped learning in general, it accentuates the significance of utilizing flipped learning in a well-organized and meaningful way. By means of mastery learning, pupils study at their own pace, thus making learning diversified. In accordance with the principles of Mastery Learning, all pupils are obligated to learn common, well-structured objectives. Whenever a scholar fails to master an objective, remedial action becomes necessary. Bergman and Sams (2012) contend that Mastery Learning bolsters flipped learning as it provides instruction that is differentiated, asynchronous, and student-centered; and it establishes a setting for remedial action and efficient feedback. This is consistent with flipped learning where pupils have the potential to learn at their own pace with a certain degree of self-sufficiency with regard to time management. Mason, Shuman, and Cook (2013) employed a semi-Mastery Learning model in their research on flipped learning in engineering courses. They incorporated a blend of project work, group work, and quizzes in the classroom. While the research had aspects of Piaget and Vygotsky, there were quizzes and elements of assessments that resembled Mastery Learning. They discovered that the students' performance overall did not alter from traditional learning, but there were advantages to using flipped learning methods in the classroom such as greater student autonomy and diversified and active learning.

The notion of reinforcement, which is a fundamental aspect of behaviorism and the principles of operant conditioning, is closely linked to Mastery Learning and the investigation of flipped learning in various ways. Firstly, similar to Mastery Learning, students are motivated by a stimulus, such as achieving a good grade or gaining knowledge, and based on the theory, they will persist in studying until they have mastered the concept to an acceptable



level. In the context of a flipped classroom, not only are students required to study the materials (i.e. the videos), but they must also prepare themselves for the classroom activities in a way that enables them to study effectively. According to Skinner, students may initially be bewildered, but over time they will grasp the concept or at least the process needed to comprehend the stimuli. Like Mastery Learning, a learner will produce a certain output based on formative or summative assessments that will determine whether they need to revisit the material or move on to another stage or topic. According to Skinner, after a period of time, students will be trained to respond appropriately if they wish to receive the intended reward or avoid the opposite - a poor grade or a lack of understanding. Consequently, while reinforcement theory may not be the primary theory underpinning the pedagogical foundations of flipped learning, it could account for the successful transition from traditional learning environments to those supported by flipped classrooms, as well as the conditioning-stimuli relationship of flipped learning and Mastery Learning to some degree.

RECENT EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Over the last couple of years, several investigations were carried out in the domain of flipped learning and teaching, out of which only the most current and relevant ones were deliberated in this segment. A plethora of new-fangled studies has demonstrated that utilizing a flipped pedagogical approach can be highly efficacious in acquiring diverse linguistic proficiencies such as oral communication, auditory perception, textual comprehension, lexicon, syntax, translational aptitudes, etc. (Ebrahimnezhad Shirvani, 2023; Abdolrezapour, 2019; Rezaei Fard et al., 2021; Bagherzadeh et al., 2021; Zarinfard et al., 2021; Parvaneh et al., 2022; Farsi et al., 2022; Allahveysi & Aliakbari, 2021; Amini et al., 2022; Davari & Mall-Amiri, 2022; Khodabandeh & Naseri, 2021). However, in this section, we reviewed the studies related to exploring the attitudes of participants (students, teachers, etc.).

Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018) conducted research on the perspectives of English major students at Hebron University on the flipped classroom approach in the second semester of the academic year 2017/2018. The study employed a mixed-method design, utilizing both questionnaires and interviews. The participants of the study consisted of 150 pre-service teachers who completed the questionnaire and 10 pre-service teachers who underwent the interview process. The questionnaire was utilized to gauge the general outlook of the students towards the flipped classroom approach, while the interview was conducted to uncover the challenges and solutions. The results of the study indicated that the flipped classroom approach fostered greater learner independence and self-management. Additionally, the respondents found the flipped classroom approach stimulating, inspiring, and captivating. The researchers concluded the study with recommendations for educators to integrate the flipped classroom technology to enhance the learning experience of their students and attain better learning outcomes.

In a recent investigation, Shahani et al. (2021) endeavored to investigate the outlooks of Iranian learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) on the concept of flipped instruction. For that purpose, 40 female EFL learners at an intermediate level, aged between 19 and 29, were chosen from the training department of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in Khuzestan, Iran, based on the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) using a convenience sampling method. They were then divided into two groups, each having the same educational approaches, as it was not feasible to have 40 students in a single class. An attitude survey was administered and analyzed in terms of frequencies and percentages. The outcomes of the frequency analyses revealed that the EFL learners who took part in the research had a favorable outlook on flipped instruction and believed that it was advantageous to them in various ways.

However, diverging from the previous two inquiries, Jalili et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative exploration that aimed to scrutinize how students perceived a flipped classroom experience compared to a conventional classroom. The study involved 23 Iranian EFL learners who were separated into two groups. Class A was subjected to non-flipped instruction for the first ten weeks, while class B was introduced to flipped learning. The teaching methods were then



switched for the next ten weeks after the midterm. The research team conducted in-depth interviews with the students to obtain their impressions of the learning process. Additionally, a questionnaire and students' portfolios were utilized to generate comprehensive conclusions. The qualitative analysis of the data yielded four themes: flipped versus non-flipped, technology integration, group commitment, and student-teacher relationship. On the whole, the learners held divergent perspectives on learning in a flipped classroom, with a preference for a non-flipped environment.

Moreover, Hosseini et al. (2023) sought to investigate the impact of flipped classrooms on EFL learners' attitudes toward learning English and their level of autonomy. The study involved selecting 68 learners based on their scores on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). The participants were then randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group. Prior to the intervention, both groups completed pre-tests that included learners' attitudes and autonomy questionnaires. The experimental group received instructional materials via WhatsApp and was instructed to study the materials before attending class, while the control group received the materials in the classroom. At the end of the study, both groups completed the questionnaires again as post-tests. The results indicated that the flipped classroom approach was effective in enhancing learner autonomy and promoting greater levels of autonomy among participants. Additionally, the experimental group exhibited positive attitudes toward learning English.

The study conducted by Eghtesadi Roudi (2020) aimed to evaluate the perception of students towards the flipped classroom and the efficacy of flipped learning in a university assessment class for English Language Teaching Bachelor's students. The first half of the semester was taught using the flipped approach, while the second half was taught using traditional lecturing. Findings revealed that students had a favorable outlook towards flipped learning, and it resulted in improved performance among students in the exam section that required higher-order thinking skills such as synthesis, analysis, and application. Additionally, the study showed that successful intelligence was a better indicator of academic performance in exams compared to the Big Five (NEO) personality traits and that creative intelligence was the key component of successful intelligence related to students' performance. The author concluded that flipped teaching was a valuable investment of time and effort for both teachers and students in preparing for the classroom, and it had the potential to motivate and engage learners.

In an attempt to investigate the implementation of flipped teaching in the university setting, Vaezi et al. (2019) conducted a mixed-method research study to explore the perceptions of both EFL students and instructors. The study involved selecting 80 advanced EFL learners, majoring in English translation, literature, and English teaching, as well as 204 EFL instructors from Iran. Participants were asked to complete the flipped teaching questionnaires, and then a subset of 10% (8 students and 20 teachers) volunteered to participate in follow-up qualitative interviews to provide more in-depth responses. The collected data from the questionnaires were analyzed, and the qualitative analysis was conducted using the interview transcripts to support the quantitative analysis results of the research. The content analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that both students and instructors had a positive perception of flipped teaching and preferred its implementation. The quantitative findings showed that most students had positive perceptions about engagement, effectiveness, attitudes, and positive affect through flipped instruction constructs in the flipped teaching class. University instructors also had a preference towards implementing flipped teaching for constructs such as language improvement, attitudes about flipped instruction, better education through flipped instruction, and difficulty of implementing flipped instruction. Overall, the study confirmed that both EFL students and instructors had a positive perception of the role of flipped teaching in the university context.

Research has been carried out to examine the perceptions of students and educators towards the flipped classroom approach and other elements of its implementation in teaching foreign languages. Nevertheless, an examination of relevant academic works revealed that no endeavors have been made to investigate the viewpoints of TEFL Master's students in Iran.



In order to close this research gap, the current study focused on the following research question:

RQ. How do Iranian M. A. students of TEFL perceive flipped teaching?

METHODOLOGY

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present inquiry primarily utilized a mixed-methods framework with greater emphasis on the qualitative aspect. To obtain quantitative information, questionnaires were administered, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to gather qualitative data.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were 30 M. A. students of TEFL studying at the Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Kavoods, Iran. They varied in age from 24 to 52. More information about the participants is given in the table below.

Table 1.

The Demographic Information of the M. A. Students

Male Students	Female Students	Age	B. A. Degree
13	17	24-38: 24	ELT: 22
			Translation: 6
		39-52: 6	Literature: 2

INSTRUMENTATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

Examining the prior tools and frameworks in the literature survey has exposed a deficiency of dependable and authentic questionnaires in the scope of this investigation to gauge learners' attitudes toward flipped teaching. As a result of this deficiency of resources in the field, this study aimed to employ a recently created questionnaire by Vaezi (2019) to meet the objectives of this analysis. The students' questionnaire consists of 13 items, respectively, on a 5-point Likert scale format. To guarantee the credibility of the questionnaire, the statements on the survey were presented to two other competent professors at the university to verify the absence of vagueness.

INTERVIEW

In order to collect more input from the participants of the study about their perceptions of flipped teaching, semi-structured interviews were prepared to examine EFL learners' perceptions. The interview questions were developed by the researchers from the relevant literature and examined by two other experts in the field of language teaching and learning to check if they were suitable for the purpose of this study. These semi-structured interviews, consisting of 4 questions for the students, were conducted following the administration of the questionnaire with 15 participants (see Appendix A).



DATA COLLECTION

At first, thirty M. A. students of TEFL received introductory demonstrations, explanations, and class instruction about flipped classroom approach and its instructional materials from the researchers at the beginning of their first session in the ‘Linguistics’ course. As for the materials, preplanned materials were the focus of this study for periods of approximately 1 hour, once a week during a 16-session semester in the English classes designed for the students of English teaching, at Islamic Azad University. It should be noted that all these materials (Videos, PowerPoints, PDFs, etc.) were gathered by consulting with the instructor himself. Then, the researchers clarified how the program will proceed and explained to the M. A. students the reasons for following this innovative method of instruction, emphasizing that it is essential that students consider the assigned videos or PPTs as their homework to come to class ready with the information needed in order to free more practice class time. Expectations from the participants were explained thoroughly, but it seemed that proper class implementation required some time. It might be due to participants’ initial resistance to the change in the instructional delivery method. In other words, students were given PDFs, videos, or PowerPoint files to study before the next class every week. Afterward, the students were asked to complete their own questionnaires to examine their perceptions about flipped teaching.

DATA ANALYSIS

The ratings given for the items on the attitude questionnaire were analyzed in terms of means to provide the answer to the research question, gain insights into M. A. students' attitudes toward flipped teaching, and examine their perceptions in a flipped teaching environment. It was carried out to ascertain the degree to which students were impacted by the flipped teaching model. Additionally, item statistics were used to examine how the M. A. students felt about the flipped teaching model. By applying Cronbach's Alpha to the questionnaire items to calculate the internal consistency within items, the validity of the questionnaires was determined. Furthermore, the exact opinions of the students were carefully transcribed and decoded. Finally, the ideas were put into thematic shapes.

RESULTS

To learn about the students' opinions of the flipped classroom, the questionnaire was used with them. The results of the item statistics for this questionnaire are in Table 1.

Table 2.

Attitude Questionnaire Towards Flipped Teaching

Factor	Items	Statements	Mean
Engagement with Other Learners through Flipped Instruction	1	Flipped Classroom (FC) improves the quality of my communication skills.	4.533
	2	In FC, I have more time to contact my classmates.	4.478
	3	There is more collaboration in FC.	4.460
	4	FC gives me more opportunities to connect with other language learners.	4.570
Enhancing language skills through Flipped	5	FC and technology help students with language skills	4.801
	6	In FC, my technological skills are enhanced.	4.562



Attitudes Toward Flipped Instruction	7	Technology helps with language skills in FC.	4.322
	8	FC helps students solve their problems.	4.937
	9	I Prefer accomplishing tasks in class and getting immediate feedback.	3.961
	10	I can learn more through traditional ways of teaching than FC.	3.530
Positive Affect through Flipped Instruction	11	I feel more relaxed while speaking in FC.	4.556
	12	I feel more confident while speaking in FC.	4.312
	13	I feel more confident while learning through FC.	4.078

We looked at the means of the respondents' ratings for the attitude questionnaire items. According to an analysis of the students' ratings, the 13 items, which examined the participants' attitudes toward the idea that the concept of flipped learning is best suited for academic purposes and higher levels similar to lower ones can still benefit from this approach to teaching. The first four items examined the engagement of the students with other classmates in a flipped classroom. Based on the means collected from this factor it can be concluded that students believe that being in a flipped classroom can greatly engage them with their classmates. The next three questions examine to what extent flipped way of teaching can enhance a student's language and technological skills, and obviously, it can be seen that the students showed a positive attitude toward these items meaning that technological and linguistic skills can be improved in a flipped classroom. The next three items somehow compare flipped teaching with traditional ways of teaching. Needless to say, based on the scores students gave to these items, it is deduced that the students preferred flipped teaching and they think that they can achieve their best results in this way of learning and not the traditional way. Finally, the last three items assess the generally positive attitudes of the students. It can be said that the students in the flipped classroom feel more confident and relaxed.

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

The researchers tried their best to elicit the opinions of these 15 M. A. students in this section. four questions were put to them in order to learn more about these teachers' perspectives on the topic. For later analysis, each of their comments was meticulously recorded and typed out. The interviewees also thought their answers would be kept confidential. The interview was conducted entirely in the participants' native tongue (i. e. Persian) to avoid any issues brought about by a lack of proficiency.

The followings were the reflections of these students being put in different thematic shapes:

- * *An In Vivo Coding has been tried for the following titles.*

I CAN SOLVE MY PROBLEMS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Because they could learn to solve problems outside of the classroom, more than half of the students preferred flipped classes. Flipped learning gave many of them the chance to be in charge of their own education, which they found to be beneficial. In addition, some reported being more self-directed after taking an English course in a flipped classroom. According to two-thirds of survey respondents, the accessibility and availability of online resources allowed them to study at their own pace. One of these students stated: "...*This is very nice to be able to go back and*



watch the videos again and again as many times as you want...it gives me a sense of self-control...ummm how should I say it...What I'm trying to say is that if I face a problem in my lessons, I can solve them outside of the classroom."

I CAN COMMUNICATE WITH MY CLASSMATES WHENEVER AND WHEREVER

Due to the group projects and cooperative learning, the majority of participants felt that the flipped classroom encouraged them to interact with their classmates. As one of the participants mentioned: *"You know, in the previous way of teaching... I mean the traditional way, the amount of interaction between the classmates was much lower than the amount of interaction in the flipped classroom. You know when you leave the class...your connection with the students will be cut until next week. This is not good. But in the flipped way I can communicate with my classmates whenever and wherever."*

In addition, they all agreed that taking English lessons in flipped classes made it easier for them to communicate with their teachers outside of class and to get academic information from them more quickly. Additionally, they appreciated how readily available the online learning materials were, and how easily and quickly they could impart knowledge to their classmates.

WE ARE, HOWEVER, HEARD AND CARED

A few respondents chose the neutral response option when asked whether the flipped class was appropriate for student-centered learning. Despite this, many of them concurred or strongly concurred that the flipped class was appropriate for learner-centered learning. One of them stated: *"I wish this was the format for all of our classes. mainly because I feel appreciated. After all, I believe someone has my best interests in mind. The instructor would simply deliver his lecture and leave the room in the traditional lecture way of teaching, caring nothing about whether we had learned anything or not. We are, however, heard and cared about when teaching is done in a flipped manner, which I believe is learner-centered."*

IN MY OPINION, IT'S APPROPRIATE FOR UNIVERSITY-LEVEL STUDENTS AS WELL

Concerning the suitability of the flipped class for learning English at the university level, simply all (almost all) of them strongly agreed with it. One of the participants said: *"I believe universities can greatly benefit from this method of instruction because university courses are challenging and we need to be engaged with the lesson in advance in order to understand it better. The least teachers can do is send us a video that relates to the topics we're studying in class. In my opinion, it's appropriate for university-level students as well."*

EVERYTHING IS MORE PREDICTABLE

One good point by some of the participants regarding the area of affective matters was the idea of stress management. Some of them believed that through flipped teaching they can better manage their stress level and get prepared for their lesson. One of these participants stated: *"It can be extremely stressful to be in a class where everyone is expected to speak about certain topics in English, especially if you have a poor command of the language. But with the flipped classroom, everything is more predictable, allowing us to better prepare for unforeseen circumstances."*

DISCUSSION

The current investigation used a mixed-method methodology to accomplish the study's objective. The participants' attitudes toward the flipped classes were examined as part of the research question through their ratings for the 13 items on the attitude questionnaire. Through a quantitative analysis of the learners' responses to the attitude questionnaire, it was possible to determine the significance of flipped teaching in terms of students' improvement in



communicative, technological, linguistic, and affective aspects. This was due to the fact that the students' attitudes toward the experimental sessions remained positive, which was evidence that they understood the value of the flipped classroom. They believed that flipped teaching was an effective strategy based on the feedback they received from people outside of the classroom. They also felt like they had more control over their education because online courses were accessible and available at a pace that suited them. They felt more interaction with their peers overall as a result of the group work and shared projects. They considered the advice from their instructor to be insightful and helpful. The current study provides no evidence that flipped teaching has a detrimental impact on students' learning. As a result, it is wise to promote the flipped classroom model because it benefits students. Flipped teaching supports constructivism's ideas by giving students the chance to engage in interactive, cooperative, and creative activities while they are constructing knowledge (Ekineh, 2022; Fulton, 2012; Mojtahedi et al., 2020; Seifert, 2023).

Additionally, it was found that flipped teaching was more successful at encouraging students to reflect on their learning as they completed the exercises and at developing their independence by allowing them to find solutions to problems outside of the classroom. According to recent studies (Aidoo et al., 2022; Aprianto & Purwati, 2020; Gustian et al., 2023; Strayers, 2012), this may be the case because flipped classrooms encourage students to learn independently and collaboratively by providing them with access to a variety of learning resources. This study's findings agreed with those of numerous other studies on how students view flipped classrooms. For instance, the results of this study agree with those of Butt (2014), who found that students had favorable perceptions of flipped classrooms at the conclusion of his research. The most recent information also backs up Farrah and Qawasmeh's (2018) study, which found that flipped classrooms encouraged students to take on more responsibility in a learner-centered environment and interact with one another.

Additionally, the findings of this study on students' attitudes toward flipped teaching are in line with those of Muniandys (2018), whose research showed how the flipped classroom affected students' academic performance and attitudes. The results are comparable to those of Khalil (2018), who illustrated a collaborative learning environment in an interesting flipped classroom. The study's results demonstrated how highly the students held group projects and collaboration in regard.

The obtained results support Karimi and Hamzavi's (2017) findings, which suggested that based on their responses to a questionnaire, students' attitudes toward the use of the flipped classroom strategy in EFL classes were positive. In a similar vein, Enfield (2013) observed that most participant comments were positive. For some students, watching videos was instructive, fascinating, and challenging. The results support research by Webb and Doman (2019) and Özkurkudis and Bümen (2019), which shows a positive shift in students' perceptions of flipped classrooms.

In general, the findings of this study are consistent with those of earlier studies (e.g. Baker, 2000; Bates & Galloway, 2012; Butt, 2014; Gannod, Burge, & Helmick, 2008; Lage, Treglia, & Platt, 2000; Maher, Lipford, & Singh, 2014), which examined the students' favorable attitudes toward flipped teaching.

CONCLUSION

A mixed-method approach was used in the current study to better understand how the M. A. students of TEFL felt about flipped classes. The results showed that students' attitudes toward flipped instruction were favorable because the majority of them agreed that flipped instruction played a positive role in fostering their motivation for learning and promoting their engagement in the classroom. As a result of flipped teaching, their attitudes were mainly toward reflective and independent learning.

The pedagogical significance of this study has many facets and can be looked into at both the micro and macro levels. On a larger scale, it can be said that more research areas have been found to help curriculum designers



understand the striking changes in learning environments and their influence on pedagogy. The syllabus designers and content producers can adhere to the expectation that teachers will use technology to present the materials before the in-person class by implementing the language tasks in this way. The study's findings may help policymakers emphasize the value of using a range of skill-instruction methods. In order to promote educational equity by focusing on educational quality, policymakers and university leaders may need to alter their strategies. They might be inspired to establish interactive learning and teaching communities to support flipped learning for students in an effort to enhance the learning environment and create more learner-centered environments.

The results of this study also seem to be applicable to institutions, researchers, teacher trainers, and students. We believe that learners will benefit most from the findings. For teachers who are constantly thinking about how to impart language skills, using computers and mobile devices for flipped instruction can be beneficial. Flipped teaching allows students to participate in the communicative context of learning, which can aid students in achieving their objectives and improving their enjoyment of the learning process. Professional trainers must develop teacher training programs and workshops that provide pedagogies that can help teachers manage and instruct in their flipped classrooms in order to increase instructors' awareness of the current student differences.

Last but not least, the researchers hopes that this study will produce broad conclusions that will be advantageous and helpful for researchers who are interested in the flipped teaching model because it gives them access to current research on the subject. In particular, for the Iranian context, where only traditional instructions are used and the real-world needs of the students are almost completely ignored, the researchers believe that this study can help bring English language courses and objectives more in line with contemporary approaches to language teaching.

It is crucial to exercise caution when extrapolating the study's conclusions because the sample and context used in the current study do not fairly represent the population of Iranian English learners in all situations. The current study only included a small sample of participants because of time restrictions and the training department's schedule. The study's focus was also limited to Gonbad Kavoo's Islamic Azad University, where the researchers preselected the study's participants.

More research can therefore be done to look at additional factors like different learning environments like language institutes, different proficiency levels, and additional language skills. Additional research that considers gender differences affected by flipped teaching can be done with the participation of a larger sample. It is also possible to look into the opinions of the instructors regarding the application of flipped learning in the classroom. Finally, it is possible to investigate how flipped learning impacts verbal, written, and written skills in other languages.

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