An Analytical Investigation of Flipped Classroom to Improve Saudi EFL Learners' Speaking Skills: a Case Study at Applied College

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Abstract
The flipped classroom strategy in the Saudi educational system is changing how we gather information, research, and share data with others. New technology tools are transforming the educational community and how instructors transmit information to students. With this new tool, the flipped classroom technology method is being used on a bigger scale at most academic levels, particularly in Saudi Arabia. This study investigated the flipped classroom method (FCM), i.e., hybrid-flexible and hyflex models based on tri-model teaching approaches, to enhance the speaking skills of EFL students at Applied College for Girls, King Khalid University, at college level, and identify students' opinions and responses towards the strategies used by the instructors. This research answered the following questions significantly: (i) What are EFL students' opinions about their English speaking skills? (ii) To what extent does mixing FCM affect EFL students' speaking skills? (iii) what are the EFL students' opinions about integrating FCM into speaking lessons? A quasi-method was adopted to collect the control (N = 32) and the focused (N = 24) groups' data. Two sets of opinion and satisfactory questionnaires were sent to the students to gain their opinions on learning the speaking skill, including the teacher's observation to perceive the methodology and the instruments used to access speaking during the study. Finally, a focused group interview was conducted to ascertain the students' satisfaction and homogeneous proficiency level in fulfilling the aims of adopting the flipped classroom approach. After one semester (13 weeks) of intervention, the outcomes revealed the significant overview that the students appreciated and found the FCM adequate in being more fluent, confident, and competent in their production classes. The findings might provide other valuable information for researchers involved in EFL advanced pedagogy to explore the operative speaking teaching method and module.

Keywords: Flipped Classroom Method, hybrid flexible, podcast and vodcast, Traditional Classroom Method, tri model, EFL learners, speaking skills

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Introduction

Because of the onset of virtual classrooms, blended learning has taken educational procedures to another level over the last two years (Khalil et al., 2020; Mishra, Gupta, and Shree, 2020). This emerging learning style incorporates technology into the classroom to enhance the student's learning experience (Roy, 2019). A Flipped Classroom Method (FMC) is a blended learning framework representing a structure for learning both in and outside the lecture hall via new technology (Goedhart, Westrhenen, Moser, 2019). The pandemic nurtured the FCM as the youngest (Khodaei et al., 2022) and most modern Tri-model pedagogy in which instructors and learners have become roomers and zoomers through the hyflex and hybrid-flexible eLearning approaches (Panopto, 2021). Moreover, hybrid learning combines complementary face-to-face (synchronous) and online learning (asynchronous) experiences in the service of intended learning objectives. In a hybrid course, all students are expected to complete the same combination of online and in-person activities. Students learn the content delivered at home while working on the content in the face-to-face classrooms. The flip makes class meetings and materials easy to find so that students can access them online or in person, during or after class sessions. Learning outcomes are based on direct instruction, active/collaborative learning, self-directed learning, and assessment for formative learning.

Since speaking is a productive skill in English, a learner produces creative and critical expressions in defense of identical information. The speaking skill is also the most challenging and complex of all the four skills, as it requires expertise in and exposure to the target language. It has been assumed for a long time that EFL learners do not know about a pact of vocabulary, pragmatic and metalinguistic, semantic, syntactic, complex grammatical concepts, and lexical fossilisation (Wang & Fan, 2020; Larsen, 1991). So, in general, poor speaking skills among EFL learners and Saudi EFL learners are caused by different things (Soomro & Farooq, 2018).

EFL adult learners could comprehend the contents of the chapters in English (Leki & Carson, 1997) but could not respond to the questions in English with their critical and creative expressions in the face-to-face classes (Gilakjani, 2011). Therefore, speaking skills have long been associated with anxiety (Hanifa, 2018; Horwitz et al., 1986), a lack of selecting suitable words and colloquial phrases, confusion using grammar, and minor and broken expression of thoughts among EFL students (Abdullah et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed pedagogy and enhancement approaches into the new normal of eLearning in the form of flipped classrooms (Harwood et al., 2017). The FCM has recently proven to be a boon and a blessing for educational figures. Vereş and Muntean (2021) and Yusuf and Taiye (2021) mentioned that students could listen to podcasts, vodcasts, and audios in their flipped classroom properly during synchronous and asynchronous space-time. In the face-to-face classes, they could also answer questions in English (Lodge et al., 2018).

These speaking problems have been addressed by sorting out the deficiencies in instructor development and instructor education, learners' autonomy, lack of materials and technology in the EFL classes, and anxiety in learning a foreign language (Kashmiri, 2020). In addition, the major one was that there was minimal opportunity to learn English through natural interaction in the target language (Rabab'ah, 2003). Previous studies conducted in the Arab World, such as by Hamad (2013), Al-Seghayer (2014), Mahboob and Elyas (2014), Alrabai (2014), Alrashidi, and

Phan (2015), revealed that most Arab students were not inspired and motivated. They also did not have the basic language skills that would have made it easy for them to talk in class.

Speaking skills require many genuine drills and reflective practices during the erudition process. Many approaches, methods, and techniques were introduced to improve learners' active engagement and self-regulated speaking. However, the major problem for most English teachers was that there were fewer contact hours, and there was not enough time to deliver all the content and facilitate students' classroom activities (Hamden et al., 2013). During the pandemic, the FCM developed an innovative learning process and a feasible solution that offered a new pedagogical tendency in the field of EFL teaching (Öztürk & Çakıroğlu, 2021).

The FCM instructional strategy has received much attention recently. The notion was that rather than using time for an instructor to introduce a concept (often via lecture), the instructor created a video lecture, screencast, or vodcast/podcast that teaches students the concepts, freeing up valuable class time for more engaging and collaborative activities. Instructors could provide direct support to students in real-time while working on material previously completed at home. Instructors could devote more time to expanding students' understanding and spending more one-on-one time with students during class. The instructor guided and facilitated the students (Milman, 2012).

In FCM, traditional classroom-based learning is reversed. Here, EFL learners have familiarized themselves with the learning material beforehand, and the actual classroom time was used to develop understanding through discussion with peers and problem-solving activities assisted by the instructor (Chou, 2020; Butt, 2014). This new approach affords a heightened opportunity for learners to engage with real-world concerns and independent investigation strategies. Here, direct teaching instructions switched the group to the individual learning space. The group space was turned into a dynamic, communicative learning space where the teacher told the students to connect ideas and think of new ways to learn about the subject (Nouri, 2016).

Speaking English is the most teasing issue for Saudis due to the Arabic medium of teaching and learning (translation method) at school and even college level, where the teaching of textbooks is just a word-for-word translation of the curriculum contents and topics. Apart from that, neither the instructors nor the Saudi learners speak English in the classroom. Hence, it resulted in the learners' inability to speak English fluently. But as EFL students go through school, they face many problems that make it harder for them to improve their speaking skills.

A flipped class is a changing mode of blended teaching where the students receive the content before the class. In contrast, the practice of the topic and content is done in the classroom at college. In this way, it is the opposite of the traditional method where students are introduced to the new topic at home, and actual classroom time is fully utilized to solve and discuss the students' problems. In this way, students can work and practice independently. Over the last decade, instructors and learners have increasingly used and analyzed flipped classrooms. Some studies, however, have been done formally to evaluate how well flipped classrooms work and how well they help EFL students improve their English oral presentation, let alone study the factors that affect how well they learn from flipped classrooms.

EFL instructors need to consider the potential of flipped teaching as it spreads across educational disciplines. This attempt synthesizes an example of flipped teaching that demonstrates the benefits of flipped classrooms in improving EFL students' speaking skills, exemplifying how flipped learning provides opportunities for increased academic success in the Saudi EFL learners' context. It is recommended that a spoken class be flipped by transitioning students from passive to active learning and focusing on the role of instructors in facilitating students' involvement with speaking. During the pandemic online classes, learners were also pleased with the flipped classroom method and the model benefits and challenges of flipped learning in EFL teaching and learning, using this example of how it can take shape in a cross-cultural communication course and their critical thinking awareness and EFL speaking anxiety.

This study looked at how concept mapping-based flipped learning, which is a way to learn by listening and talking, affects learning achievement. Therefore, EFL learners face several challenges that negatively impact their attempts to achieve English proficiency. This study was a case study at the Applied College for Girls at King Khalid University. It looked at how the flipped classroom could help Saudi EFL students improve their speaking skills.

Speaking is one of the fundamentals of communication. EFL contexts call for special attention and instruction to be learned. Unfortunately, most EFL students were not confident about speaking English in class and publicly before people. They learned English, but they did not understand how to use it. Most learners thought that their instructors didn't encourage them and didn't teach them the right way to improve their speaking.

On the one hand, EFL students were worried about making mistakes in speaking; on the other hand, they felt shy and faced a lack of self-confidence. The comfort zone of using the mother tongue in talking was also a barrier faced by EFL learners. Like other non-native speakers, these Saudi English students had trouble developing their speaking skills, which made it hard for them to communicate when they needed to. Therefore, the study sought to analyze how new teaching and learning approaches could have been beneficial in enhancing students' speaking skills.

This research effort has attempted to explore the advantages of instructing through a flipped-classroom approach to boost the speaking skills of EFL learners at level 2 in the Applied College for Girls. Therefore, this research work attempted to answer the following questions-
1. What are EFL students' opinions about their English speaking skills?
2. To what extent does mixing FCM affect EFL students' speaking skills?
3. What are the EFL students' opinions about integrating FCM in speaking lessons?

Literature review
21st-century researchers search for learners who are adjustable, creative, self-motivated, and willing to try new things. Therefore, emergent research suggests moving away from traditional teaching-centered approaches towards more student-centered methods to enhance such skills. Because of this, flipped learning is a method of teaching that lets students use problem-based and inquiry-based methods (Butt, 2014).

Looking back, many types of research have proved the Flipped Classroom approach to pedagogy has a positive effect on learners' learning outcomes (Çakıroğlu & Öztürk, 2017; Liu et al., 2019). According to Sergis et al. (2018), there was little doubt that FCM contributed positively to students' cognitive learning outcomes, motivation, and engagement in the information and communication courses. Furthermore, more recent studies on FCM have found favorable improvements in academic achievement, motivation, attitude, metacognition, satisfaction, self-regulated learning, and self-efficacy, drawing attention to variables researched in FCM (Al-Samarraie et al., 2020). With online/blended learning enhancement, the flipped classroom model (FCM) has increased in popularity as an innovative learning practice to support and learn English skills. As Cab (2018) mentioned, in the new normal situation where the actual face-to-face contact hours were at a minimum, the FCM reversed traditional teaching and reorganized the contact time to utilize class time for learners to learn.

Researchers have proved that FCM offers students opportunities to study with rich course content at their own pace, facilitating a flexible learning environment with technology support (Shih, & Huang, 2020). In addition, students prepare for the lesson with the materials out of class; they freely use and perform hands-on activities in the in-class sessions (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). In the FCM, students could participate in online discussions during out-of-class sessions while learning about course content by watching videos (Hosseini et al., 2020; Leatherman & Cleveland, 2020). In this period, learning management systems, YouTube, blogs, and wikis were used to understand the given content. Educators also offer specialized online learning platforms (Wanner & Palmer, 2015). In the in-class sessions, students could practice what they have learned at out-of-class sessions through collaborative group work, problem-solving, discussing, and working on projects (Huang & Hong, 2016) with instructors' feedback and guidance.

Various studies by Li & Suwanthep, 2017; Lin & Hwang, 2018; Zainuddin et al., 2019 explained the positive output of the application of FCM and its incorporation in enhancing learners' speaking or oral competence, English language higher-order thinking skills, and self-efficacy skills. Furthermore, Lee and Wallace (2018) and Abdullah et al. (2019) discovered that the FCM model allowed learners asynchronously more time to revise, practice, and investigate more English wherever they were. A study done in Taiwan (Lin & Hwang, 2018) found that a Facebook-based online community-based flipped classroom had a big impact on how well university students did in their oral presentations.

In traditional learning, a lower level of knowledge, such as remembering and understanding, occurs first in class. In comparison, the learners are usually left to work on activities that involve a higher level of learning outside of the classroom. However, in the FCM, learning is flipped. Learners finish the lower level of cognitive work before class at their own pace. Furthermore, when they come to class, they are involved in higher cognitive levels of learning with peers and teachers (Nazara, 2019).

Methods

This section presents the study's methodology and describes the participants, the instruments, and the procedure. This research has implemented a case study approach to examine EFL students' perceptions of the advantages of using flipped classes and the main problems they

faced while adopting them. It shows the analysis of the Five-Likert scale based on two sets of opinions and satisfaction questionnaires. At the beginning of the semester (week 2), the students were sent a set of opinion questionnaires to find out what they thought about learning speaking skills. At the end of the semester (week 12), they were sent a set of satisfactory questionnaires to find out what they thought about the flipped model of learning to improve their speaking skills, as well as the instructors' observations of the methods and tools used to test speaking during the study.

Participants

The researchers applied the flipped learning class at the tertiary level in Applied College for Girls at King Khalid University in the first semester (13 weeks) from September to December 2021 at the college in order to measure the differences between the students' achievement in the traditional and the flipped classes. The researchers randomly chose one of two preparatory year student groups. Both groups consist of 56 students. The flipped learning was implemented in group (1), which consisted of 32 students; all were female, and their ages ranged from 16 to 19.

Instruments

The researchers used two different methods to achieve the aim of the study. First, this research has implemented a case study approach to examine EFL students' perceptions of the advantages of using flipped classes and the main problems they faced while adopting them. It provided an insight into assessing the effects of the flipped classroom approach for improving EFL students' speaking skills at the university level. Therefore, a pre, during, and post-experimental research design was utilized to examine the impact of FCM on speaking skills and its domains. A quasi-method was adopted to collect the data. The qualitative method included the teacher's observation to perceive the approach and the instruments used to access speaking during the speaking classes in the first semester.

Furthermore, instructors' observations were an effective data collection strategy for using the pedagogy and presentation to produce the classes in the middle of the first semester, which helped to enquire about a set of issues. In addition, 15 students' semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify the satisfaction level of the students in fulfilling the aim of adopting flipped classes. Two groups at level 2 were selected for research purposes: the focused group (N = 34) for the flipped model of instructions; the control group (N = 24) for the traditional mode of instructions; and the experimental group (N = 32) for the online mode of instructions. Since this study focused on one particular context of using the flipped model of learning speaking skills, without the students' views, the study would have been undone. For the qualitative process, the second mode of data collection was the continuous observation of the study group and control group's classes during the semester.

The procedure of the study

This study was conducted at the same college. The population was the PYP students at level-2, and the researchers selected one group to implement the study and to compare their performance and presentation in flipped and traditional pedagogical approaches with the second one. The prescribed curriculum contents of the textbook were delivered accordingly throughout the first semester at the same college. By the end of last week, the data was ready to be analyzed. By this time, the observation of the two speaking skills course instructors was conducted to

evaluate analytically the beneficial issues. Moreover, the goals of the study and the achievements of the course were taken into consideration during the design of the tasks and the activities of all 13 weeks' instructional plan.

Data collection process

The current study implemented two research instruments to answer the research questions. The first tool for quantitative data collection, two sets of questionnaires (Appendix A and D), is based on the Likert scale. 32 students responded from both groups to the opinion questionnaire, and 24 students shared their answers to the satisfaction questionnaire. In the study, a group of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students was used as a sample to show and confirm how flipped classes help improve speaking skills.

For qualitative data collection, researchers contacted focus group EFL students via email to be interviewed online in the study. It was emphasised that their contribution was voluntary. The questions were introduced in both Arabic and English to get more reliable answers from the students. Students could freely share their ideas, picking up any language wherever they felt comfortable.

Most of the students expressed their opinions in Arabic, and later, their opinions were transcribed into English. The focus group interview included three types of questions. Question No. 1 was the ice-breaking question to be answered by anyone. The first category asked about the advantages of the integration of flipped classes in teaching speaking skills, and the second category asked about the problems they have faced during the FCM along with the valuable suggestions of the students. Lastly, concluding comments were used to thank participants and reiterate the confidentiality of their responses. During the online focus group interview session, the purpose of the study was explained, and the necessity of providing honest views to support the expansion of the study's trustworthiness was highlighted. The focus group interviews took place in two shifts and lasted between an hour and two hours.

Findings

What are EFL students' opinions about their English speaking skills?

A 19-item Likert scale questionnaire was used here, with responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." It was divided into three sections: EFL learners' problems, perceptions, and preferences for learning speaking skills. The following analysis is carried out using SPSS, depending on the first research question. This quantitative analysis aims to generate descriptive and statistical findings to throw light on the students' viewpoints (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). In addition, SPSS has been used to measure the reliability of questions.

Reliability

As shown in the table, the range of the alpha scale for all items in all the sections is above 0.6, which indicates average reliability. In this way, the reliability of the constructs varies from 76% to 61%, which is well above the required value, i.e., 0.60 (Cronbach, 1951). Therefore, the results of the opinion questionnaire are reliable.

Table 1. reliability statistics of the opinion questionnaire-

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.767	.763	7
.616	.619	6
.673	.670	6

This section summarizes the findings of the students' opinion questionnaire (appendix A). Here, primary products related to students' problems, perceptions, and preferences regarding speaking skills are analyzed, with frequency and percentages mentioned.

Table 2. I am usually afraid of making mistakes while speaking

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	8	6.5	25.0	25.0
	Agree	7	5.7	21.9	46.9
	Neutral	10	8.1	31.3	78.1
	Disagree	5	4.1	15.6	93.8
	Strongly disagree	2	1.6	6.3	100.0
	Total	32	26.0	100.0	
Missing	System	91	74.0	-	-
	Total	123	100.0	-	-

Responding to the first statement, as shown in table 2, 46.9% of students are afraid of making mistakes while speaking English. The frequency of neutral students who are unsure of their speaking skills is high. Out of 32 students, only seven disagreed with this fact. Responding to another question, 40.6% of students strongly agreed and agreed that they have problems expressing themselves fluently in English, while another 25% were neutral in responding to this statement. The high frequency of the ratio shows that most EFL non-native speakers at the college in IEP are not fluent in English.

Table 3. I don't have enough vocabulary knowledge for speaking

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	9	7.3	28.1	28.1
	Agree	8	6.5	25.0	53.1
	Neutral	6	4.9	18.8	71.9
	Disagree	8	6.5	25.0	96.9
	Strongly disagree	1	.8	3.1	100.0
	Total	32	26.0	100.0	-
Missing	System	91	74.0	-	-
	Total	123	100.0	-	-

Table three shows that more than 53% of students who responded to this statement strongly agreed that they do not have enough vocabulary to speak. ESL students need enough vocabulary to convey formal and informal communication noticeably and succinctly. While responding to another statement, 43.8% strongly agreed and agreed that speaking is generally neglected among the four skills in the classroom. 28% are neutral about this statement. It is a productive skill but not given as much attention in academic settings as reading and writing (Sharma, 2015). While responding to one statement, it was found that pronunciation was not a difficulty for the students. 37.6% of the students disagreed with this statement. However, 43.8% agreed that they needed more chances to participate in class discussion activities.

Table 4. speaking is generally neglected among four skills in classroom

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	5	4.1	15.6	15.6
	Agree	9	7.3	28.1	43.8
	Neutral	9	7.3	28.1	71.9
	Disagree	7	5.7	21.9	93.8
	Strongly disagree	2	1.6	6.3	100.0
	Total	32	26.0	100.0	-
Missing	System	91	74.0	-	-
	Total	123	100.0	-	-

According to table four, 43.8 percent strongly agreed that speaking is the most undervalued of the four skills in the classroom, while 28 percent disagreed. It demonstrates that a greater emphasis should be placed on honing speaking skills. Concerning another question, the mean found is 2.97, indicating insufficient efficient facilities in the language laboratory for practicing speaking. This statement was agreed upon by 34.4 percent of students and disagreed upon by 31.3 percent.

Table 5. I think learning speaking skill is fun

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	8	6.5	25.0	25.0
	Agree	12	9.8	37.5	62.5
	Neutral	5	4.1	15.6	78.1
	Disagree	7	5.7	21.9	100.0
	Total	32	26.0	100.0	-
Missing	System	91	74.0	-	-
	Total	123	100.0	-	-

Table five shows that 62.5 percent of students agree that learning to speak is fun. It shows that learners expressed an interest in speaking but wanted to learn in a fun environment. Similarly, 46.9% of students strongly disagree that learning how to speak in class is uninteresting. This statement received a 21% neutral response.

Table 6. I feel shy when speaking English

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	8	6.5	25.0	25.0
	Agree	2	1.6	6.3	31.3
	Neutral	10	8.1	31.3	62.5
	Disagree	7	5.7	21.9	84.4
	Strongly disagree	5	4.1	15.6	100.0
	Total	32	26.0	100.0	-
Missing	System	91	74.0	-	-
	Total	123	100.0	-	-

According to table six, around 31.3% of students agreed to feel shy when speaking English. While responding to another question, 43.8% strongly agreed that they do not care much when making mistakes while speaking English. On the other hand, 53.1% strongly agreed that speaking could be practiced outside the classroom for improvement. They can improve their speaking if they

converse well with their friends. A good population, 59.4%, strongly agreed to be a native-like speaker, whereas 18.8% were neutral. Overall, about 60% of students wished to be native-like speakers.

Table 7. online sources help me get additional practice to enhance my speaking

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	9	7.3	28.1	28.1
	Agree	9	7.3	28.1	56.3
	Neutral	10	8.1	31.3	87.5
	Disagree	3	2.4	9.4	96.9
	Strongly disagree	1	.8	3.1	100.0
	Total	32	26.0	100.0	-
Missing	System	91	74.0	-	-
	Total	123	100.0	-	-

As presented in the above table, 56.3% of students strongly agreed that online sources helped them get additional practice to enhance their speaking. In addition, 40.6% need more intensive use of English (flipped or blended) to enhance their speaking. Furthermore, 43.8% of students strongly agreed that they need more appropriate opportunities (flipped) to improve speaking in speaking class. Finally, the students strongly agree that speaking should be taught separately, not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing.

What extent does the mixing of FCM affect EFL students' speaking skills?

Along with quantitative research, the study used a qualitative case study approach. The instructors' observation form and the students' interview questionnaire (appendices B and C) collect data. During the intervention, the results of the qualitative analysis would be used to build a theory that would explain how individual, contextual, and instructor-related factors, approaches, and strategies affected how speaking skills were learned using the FCM. The illustration below is from the second research question.

Teachers' observation in speaking classes

Frequently scheduled observation of both groups was done to investigate the real-world efficacy of the flipped classroom while the classes were in session during the study. The statement revealed how the integration of FCM in speaking lessons affected the participants. The primary purpose was to observe the methodology and the instruments used to facilitate speaking during the classes. Also, based on the questionnaire (appendix B), two different EFL teachers were observed as they taught speaking skills to both focused and controlled groups.

In the flipped classroom, the EFL instructor always uses the questioning and answering technique to cater to the interests of the speaking class, whereas in the traditional classroom, it is done sometimes or rarely. The questioning and answering process was based on online conversation audio, videos, and picture descriptions. Since EFL students had access to these online materials, the focused EFL teacher usually got the students to talk in pairs or small groups.

The controlled group EFL instructor often focused on the activities primarily available in the book, while the focused group EFL instructor designed suitable activities based on the previously given content via BB or online tools. For example, though the time spent developing the speaking activities was almost the same, the content was referred to via BB or available in the prescribed course textbook, Unlock-2: Listening, Speaking & Critical Thinking. Nonetheless, the FCM could practice various speaking activities compared to the traditional classroom.

In addition, observing the EFL instructors, it was noticed that students were always allowed to participate in the FCM classes, whereas in traditional classes, participation was rarely found. As a result, most students got opportunities in FCM, while only a few got involved in TCM. The instructor could see the accomplishment of the tasks and activities since the FCM content was made available through BB. Moreover, the instructor could assign grades and comments to the students during and after the class. The statements were mainly positive, whereas, in TCM, the researcher could not find such a system of comments and grades.

The FCM was observed implementing a student-centered approach while the TCM mainly followed the teacher-centered approach. For example, in the flipped way, the students usually listened to the audio, watched videos, took notes to get an idea about the class topic, and participated in thriving in-class activities. On the other hand, when students used the traditional method, they did not know much about the topic that was talked about in class.

Students' interview responses

Frequently scheduled observation of both groups was done to investigate the real-world efficacy of the flipped classroom while the classes were in session during the study. The statement revealed how the integration of FCM in speaking lessons affected the participants. The primary purpose was to observe the methodology and the instruments used to facilitate speaking during the classes. Also, based on the questionnaire (appendix B), two different EFL teachers were watched as they taught speaking skills to both focused and controlled groups.

A semi-structured interview was conducted as part of the second data collection instrument, in which 15 students from the focused group voluntarily participated. The interview was conducted online based on the abovementioned information and via email. During their investigation, twelve questions were posed to assess the effectiveness of using flipped classes, notably in terms of research. The discussion was enthralling and lasted more than an hour. To elicit more detailed replies from the students, the questions were translated into Arabic so the participants could comprehend them. The researchers discussed many questions that formed essential components of their research. Most participants were positive about using the FCM to acquire speaking abilities. Students benefit in various ways. All the interviewees agreed that if students follow all the tools and online materials sincerely and honestly, the flipped classroom method works remarkably.

Efficacy and effectiveness of using FCM in enhancing speaking skills

The flipped classes have positioned themselves supreme over f2f classes, especially in learning speaking skills. Since the topics and related content are given before the classes, flipped content helps the students prepare for them and get a general idea about them. In addition, some students found it helpful to overcome their shyness about speaking up in front of their instructor

and other students in the class. The following are a few statements transcribed from the students' interviews:

Student A: FCM helped us too much to prepare and avoid mistakes in our answers before the speaking class, and FCM helped us do different assignments even if we made mistakes, but it encouraged us so much.

Student B: I think FCM helped us with speaking when the instructor sent us any tasks; it made us able to hear them at our own pace, correcting the mistakes. In addition, we could search for the problematic synonyms of the words, and we had time to fix many things before the class.

Student C: FCM helped me so much in communication with the instructor as well as with other students. It made the learning flexible, and I could speak freely without fear.

Student D: I think FCM is very useful and reflects well on my mood. I can answer using different sources and ask my family about anything that I want to know.

Student E: From my point of view, this kind of learning comes through if essential time has to be devoted to collaborative work for communication. It is advantageous, especially in collaborative work. We can repeat the video many times.

Student F: In general, it prepared us for the F2F class. Can I understand the content better to get a general idea about the topic of the lecture? We can listen to it several times at our convenience. It also lowers the anxiety level. Moreover, I overcame my shyness, and I think FCM developed my speaking by 40%.

FCM offered access to different online resources

The FCM method relies primarily on online resources to supply students with materials. However, students could benefit entirely from the information both synchronously and asynchronously. Blackboard, the university's LMS platform, delivered such content and materials. In their interview, the students discussed various resources that helped them. As students responded:

Student A: We benefited from different online channels. E.g., I can search for any topic on my mobile using YouTube. I can search for the knowledge on different websites and then decide which is helpful for me.

Student B: I can upload all the modules. Moreover, I can listen to and repeat vocabulary as much as I can, so I can speak confidently. Finally, I can use different resources to use later to improve my speaking.

Student C: Online resources are 90% useful and helped me with vocabulary learning. For example, when the teacher sends me audio electronically, I start writing unfamiliar words in my notes to understand and memorize them later.

Some students agreed that if the audio or video content was sent to them prior to class, they could get help from some English or Arabic instructors or their family members to help them with any problematic issues they might experience. Moreover, they could use any online tools, e.g., YouTube, Google translation, an online/offline dictionary, and many more available sources, to overcome any difficulties.

FCM to be self-directed learner

Findings using audio and video-enabled instructional approaches, flipped classrooms have begun to redesign classrooms and encourage active learning. Students' responses explored flipped

classrooms and the advantages students obtained from the abundance of online content available on the LMS. The flipped classroom model has transformed the learning paradigm, giving students control over their learning speed and becoming familiar with the assets of learning materials that promote effective learning. This research can increase students' self-directed learning, and it proposes that it be used in future EFL classrooms to enhance speaking skills-

Student A: Using translation simultaneously, I have become a more independent learner.

Student B: In online learning, in the context of flipped classes, we search for the knowledge ourselves in different sources. We trained ourselves a lot and did not depend on the instructor as the only source of knowledge.

Student C: When searching for knowledge, I will not forget the information I hear.

Problems faced by students at FCM in enhancing speaking skills

Every stock has two aspects. On the one hand, FCM proved positively beneficial and advantageous. On the other hand, it did not suit some students. They preferred the f2f classes over the flipped classrooms, especially for speaking skills. Some students shared their problems while using the FCM during the current semester-

Student A: I can understand it more in f2f. Additionally, some students did not listen to the submitted tasks from the teachers. As a result, some did not commit to this kind of learning.

Student B: I think it helped us, but not more than 50%.

Student C: In general, it is not suitable for me. I like f2f more. I prefer communication in real-time situations.

Suggestions concerning using FCM in enhancing speaking skills

The interview ended with the students' suggestions. The following were a few suggestions conveyed by students:

Student A: *I think topics have to be related or unrelated to the books. However, some topics might help us in daily life, e.g., related to our career, especially how we can adapt to university without choosing our required major.*

Student B: *The instructor should send us some motivational clips prior to lessons—they may be educational, songs, video clips, etc.*

In this way, this qualitative (exploratory) part can be perceived as the phase to determine the students' familiarity with the efficacy and effectiveness of the FCM in learning speaking skills. *What are the EFL students' opinions about integrating FCM into speaking lessons?*

The focused group students answered the satisfaction questionnaire willingly in reply to the third study question. The questionnaire has 15 items on a Five-Likert scale ranging from "always" to "never." It is confirmed in the section below utilizing a quantitative analysis of the study (satisfactory). The quantitative portion of the study could be utilized to extrapolate qualitative findings (Lobe, 2008). The qualitative approaches are used to answer how effective the FCM is at teaching speaking skills. As Patton (1990: 132) suggests, "Descriptive analysis can put flesh on the bones of research findings, bringing findings to life in case analysis."

Reliability of satisfaction questionnaire scale: all variables

The reliability of the questionnaire is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items. The range of the alpha scale in the table for all the sections is above 0.6, indicating average reliability. In this way, the reliability of the constructs varies from 76% to 61%, which is well above the required value, i.e., 0.60 (Cronbach, 1951). So the satisfaction results of this study are reliable.

Table 8. *Reliability Statistics of Satisfaction Questionnaire-*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.793	0.781	15

This section presents the outcomes from the descriptive statistical analysis of the Students' Satisfaction Questionnaire. In addition, primary products related to students' satisfaction with speaking skills are analyzed here.

Table 9. *did you use to watch the videos before coming to the flipped classroom*

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Sometimes	9	37.5	37.5	41.7
	Very often	4	16.7	16.7	58.3
	Always	10	41.7	41.7	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	-

Answering the first statement, 41.7% of the students always watched video lectures before coming to the classes. Only 4.2 percent responded negatively. The histogram showed the normal distribution of the curve. The mean is 3.96%.

Table 10. *did you use to listen the audios before coming to the flipped classroom*

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Sometimes	6	25.0	25.0	29.2
	Very often	4	16.7	16.7	45.8
	Always	13	54.2	54.2	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	-

Responding to this statement, 54.2% of students always listened to the audio before coming to class. Only 4.2% did not listen to the audio, which is very small. The histogram shows the high frequency of the statements.

Table 11. *was assessing the online speaking course tools and materials easily approachable to you*

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Sometimes	4	16.7	16.7	20.8
	Very often	3	12.5	12.5	33.3
	Always	16	66.7	66.7	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	-

In the above table, 66.5% of students replied that online course tools and materials were easily approachable. However, the frequency is only one who replied negatively. While 41.7% (always)

and 33.3% (very often) of students replied that the video lectures were appropriate and optimal for managing speaking activities, 54.2% of students also found the video lectures entertaining and productive. Only 8.3% replied negatively, saying they rarely found it entertaining and productive.

Table 12. *did you use to review the text and videos again just before coming to the classes*

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Sometimes	6	25.0	25.0	33.3
	Very often	4	16.7	16.7	50.0
	Always	12	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	-

Showing their satisfaction towards FCM, half of the respondents answered that they reviewed the texts and videos again just before coming to the classes. Similarly, half of the students answered that they always spent scheduled time in FCM practicing English. At the same time, 41.7% of the students responded that due to FCM, their participation increased in speaking classes. Only 8.3% did not participate fully in FCM.

Table 13. *did you perform better academically in the flipped classroom model*

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Sometimes	2	8.3	8.3	12.5
	Very often	9	37.5	37.5	50.0
	Always	12	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	-

The high percentage in table 13 shows that 50% of students could do better academically. They performed well and became more confident at speaking. Some learners in the scheduled flipped classes, on the other hand, found the audio and videos boring or hard to pay attention to.

Table 14. *would you like English speaking course to be conducted in flipped classroom model*

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Rarely	2	8.3	8.3	12.5
	Sometimes	6	25.0	25.0	37.5
	Very often	5	20.8	20.8	58.3
	Always	10	41.7	41.7	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 shows that 41% of the students liked this three-way way to learn how to speak and wanted the listening and speaking classes to be taught in a flipped way.

Table 15. *did you observe any positive changes in your attitude towards in the flipped classroom model experience*

Process	Nature	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Rarely	1	4.2	4.2	12.5
	Sometimes	2	8.3	8.3	20.8
	Very often	6	25.0	25.0	45.8

	Always	13	54.2	54.2	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	-

The table above revealed a large population of 54.2% who confirmed positive changes in their attitude toward their FCM experience. It led to positive changes in their perceptions due to the circumstances caused by the COVID pandemic. They would be able to practice using the tri-model of learning in this situation if there were fewer contact hours available for the teaching and learning process.

Discussion

According to Yılmaz (2017), the study's findings show that students in EFL settings perceive they cannot speak English fluently and confidently. Moreover, EFL students feared making mistakes when speaking or communicating with others. A lack of vocabulary was one of the reasons for this. As a result, their capacity to communicate fluently was hampered. Therefore, there was an utter need for speaking skills to be focused on more in classrooms, and more facilities should be given to EFL students. Even students were more interested in learning to speak, provided they got a fun environment instead of a boring one. A large percentage of the population had a positive attitude toward being a native-like speaker. They accepted that speaking could be practiced with a friend outside the classroom and could be done more often. Also, online sources could help them get more speaking practice, and they need to use English more often (flipped or blended) to improve their speaking.

A well-designed flipped course requires significant preparation and execution, but it immensely enriches both students and instructors. Bloom's Taxonomy could then be used to create practical online and in-class elements that enhance student outcomes. For example, learners in a flipped classroom got more time to connect with others and their instructor and interact in subgroups.

The observation and student interviews revealed a greater degree of importance of the flipped method of pedagogy and demonstrated the great significance of the mixing of FCM in enhancing students' speaking skills. Also, the FCM was more focused on the students than the TCM, and it got a lot of attention for giving students information about their courses ahead of time, mostly through online learning management systems.

Students' interviews indicated that they had benefited in a variety of ways. They agreed that if all the tools and online material were used wisely and nicely, FCM could be revealed to be speaking skills-oriented. The students could also listen to the audio files at their own pace while understanding the other materials. This caterer gave them the confidence to speak fearlessly, frankly, and flawlessly. FCM increased the flexibility and feasibility of learning through collaborative scaffolding activities among students.

Because of easy access to various online sources, learners overcame barriers in vocabulary, pronunciation, and phonetics. On the one hand, these autonomous activities positioned them as self-directed learners, but on the other hand, the approach was unsuitable for some of them. It demonstrated that such students are spoon-feeders who require constant instructor facilitation. Furthermore, it showed the students' lack of attention to the supplies, contents, and materials. By

the end of the course, EFL students had shared their ideas for making the FCM more productive and effective. It would be more exciting and impressive if the learning could be related to absolute, life-like, and career-oriented themes. For a long time, putting in motivational clips, songs, and video clips could help students learn better than for a long time.

The quantitative analysis revealed a high level of satisfaction among the students. The FCM motivated the students to prepare before the class by watching the video and listening to the audio. The learning instruction given prior to classes proved very beneficial to most students. However, intrinsic motivation becomes an issue here. The students willing to learn speaking took more interest in flipped material and became more regular and repetitive in such learning activities. Accessible and approachable online tools and appropriate and optimal materials effectively manage speaking activities. Even though the content that was flipped was fun and helpful, students said they wanted more fun.

Foldnes (2017) found that flipped content enhanced the class attendance and participation of the students, but only those whose high academic levels seemed more influenced and intermingled. Since a few students had obstacles in getting and understanding it, they did not find it satisfactory because of their cognition level of the items' content, speed, vocabulary, and semantics. However, many students did better academically and could concentrate more in flipped classes than in traditional ones. The focused group learners desired the English-speaking courses to be conducted in FCM. The students found that their hesitation and reluctance to speak English had changed for the better.

Students' responses suggested that FCM would be more fun, entertaining, and inspiring to be communicative when speaking another language. The findings might provide other valuable information for researchers involved in EFL advanced pedagogy to explore the operative speaking teaching method and module. More FCM speaking skills pedagogy and improvement will be needed to give EFL learners more chances to improve their listening and speaking skills through the use of advanced new technologies and carefully planned courses.

Conclusion

Learning English as a foreign language is a significant issue for Saudi students, resulting in an inability to speak English. The primary goal of this research is to discover a more adaptable, hybrid, and EFL student-friendly approach to overcoming the challenge and becoming confident and comfortable speaking effectively. As a result, the researchers concluded that the mixed form of flipped learning improves students' attitudes and perspectives, making them more confident. According to the results, both the synchronous and asynchronous modes of material delivery were beneficial. Students might use their free time at home to study more about the topic, seek assistance from internet resources, and enhance their vocabulary. This would increase their general speaking abilities. In addition, students might be able to go over their spoken lectures with the teacher to manage their own learning better. This research effort, framed within constructivist pedagogy, synthesized the FCM pedagogy that undoubtedly validated the constructive role-plays of flipping the classroom in developing EFL learners' speaking skills. In the study, instructors applied and used the tri-model, which led students to become more engaged in the learning process. It has often been noticed that EFL learners do not practice speaking English in the traditional classroom or

speak English hesitantly. Such pedagogy and enhancement pushed it toward poor English speaking proficiency. To overcome such challenges, the flipped classroom model provided the perfect solution and platform to safeguard L2's ability to get proper practice for inside and outside speaking through visualizing TED, podcasts, and vodcast videos and audios and working on a set vocabulary and grammar structure used at home synchronously and asynchronously, which peers and instructors were observing. At the same time, there were many challenges for students and instructors. Following that, instructors played an essential role in student discussions about various reasons and topics. When students had information gaps and a lack of brainstorming while speaking, instructors helped them fill in the gaps with left information and pushed them toward content and abstract words to create sound brainstorms. Researchers interested in advanced EFL pedagogy could use the results to look into the operative speaking teaching method and module.

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Consent for participation
        All the students volunteered to take part in the current study.
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Appendices
Appendix A: Students' Opinion Questionnaire

Form 1: Students' Opinion Questionnaire (Based on Likert Scale)

EFL Students' Problem Oriented Questions (from 1 to 7)

1. I am usually afraid of making mistakes while speaking.
2. I have problems expressing myself fluently in English.
3. I do not have enough vocabulary knowledge for speaking.
4. My pronunciation is not good enough which causes difficulty in speaking.
5. I cannot find the chance to express my ideas and participate in class discussion activities.
6. Speaking is generally neglected among four skills in classrooms.
7. There are not enough and efficient facilities in the language laboratory for practicing speaking.

EFL Students' Perception   Related Questions (from 8 to 13)

8. I think learning speaking is fun.
9. I think learning speaking in class is boring.
10. I feel shy when speaking English.
11. I do not care much when I make mistakes while speaking.
11. Speaking can be practiced outside the class for improvement.
12. I like to have a conversation with friends to improve my speaking.

EFL Students' Preference Related Questions (from 14 to 19)

13. My goal is to endeavor for being a native-like speaker.
14. I like speaking lessons, and my teacher is a model for speaking in the class.
15. Online sources help me get additional practice to enhance my speaking.
17. Speaking should be taught separately, not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing.
16. More intensive use of English (flipped/blended) is required in Speaking class.
17. I need more appropriate opportunities (flipped/blended) to improve speaking in Speaking class.

Appendix B: Teachers' Observation Form

Date of session: _____

Schedule: _____

Subject: _____

Purpose: To observe the methodology and the instruments used to access speaking during the English Intensive Program classes at Level 2. (Focused and Control group)-

1. Teacher uses the questioning and answering technique to cater interest in the speaking class.
☐   Always   ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

2. Conversations and picture description is used to initiate the speaking class.
☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

3. Teacher persuades pairs or group discussion in the class.
☐ Always   ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

4. Teacher designs good activities to develop speaking during the class.
☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

5. Activities used by teacher during the class to develop speaking and time used to develop them:

Activity	Time
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. There is a variety of activities used to develop speaking during class.

☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

7. Number of activities used in a class to develop speaking?

_____

8. Students are given the opportunity of participating in some way during the class.

☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

9. Number of students who are given the opportunity of participating during the class.

☐ All students ☐ Most students ☐ Some students ☐ Very few students

10. Teacher takes notes or assigns any type of grades to students' participation.

☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

11. Teacher provides comments during /after student's participation in class.

☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

12. If there are comments made to students' participation, they are:

☐ Mostly positive ☐ Both positive and negative ☐ Mostly negative

13. Topics used in speaking activities are related to real –life situations and contexts.

☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

14. Teacher uses learners-centered approach for the speaking class.

☐ Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

15. Teacher gives enough time to various speaking exercises in the class.

☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

16. Students listen to the records/audios on the radio or video on BB and takes help back to the class.

☐   Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Almost never

Appendix C: Student's Interview Questionnaire
(Filliped Classroom method in special reference of Speaking Skills)

1. What do you think about the integration of flipped classroom method (FCM) to learning speaking skills?

Section A- Advantages of Flipped Classes

2. In your opinion, did flipped classroom method offer you the opportunity to review the speaking lectures as many times as you need to.
3. Did flipped classroom method offer you access to the online course tools and materials related to speaking skills? Examples.
4. To what extent did the flipped classroom help you to improve your learning speaking skills?
5. Did you learn to be a self-directed learner with the mixing of flipped classroom methods and approaches?
6. How did the flipped classroom help you to cooperate with your classmates effectively?
7. How did the flipped classroom help you to participate in the learning speaking strategies effectively?
8. What are the techniques used by the teacher that enables you to manage your learning activities?
9. Do you think the flipped classroom is a very enjoyable approach to learn speaking skills? Give examples?
10. Do you prefer the flipped classroom over the traditional classroom to learn speaking skills? If yes, why?

Section B: Difficulties during Flipped Classes

11. Did you face any complications or difficulties during the integration of flipped method to the

speaking classes? If yes, what was that?

Section C: Suggestions for Flipped Classes

12. How can flipped classroom method be more beneficial to improve the speaking skills of the

students? What are your suggestions that you would like to add here?

_____

Appendix D: Students' Questionnaire

EFL students' Satisfaction Questionnaire (Always, Very often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

1.   Did you use to watch the video lectures before coming to the flipped classroom?
2.   Did you use to listen the audios before coming to the flipped classroom?
3.   Was accessing the online speaking course tools and materials easy approachable for you?
4.   Did you find the lengths of the video lectures appropriate and optimal to manage speaking activities?
5.   Were the video lectures given to you before the flipped classes entertaining and productive?
6.   Did you use to review the texts and videos again just before coming to the flipped classes?
7.   Did you use to spend scheduled time in flipped classes for practicing the speaking skill?
8.   Did your participation increase in the classes due to the flipped classroom method?
9.   Were the texts and videos entertaining and motivational in the flipped classes?
10. Did you meet with any difficulties understanding the texts and videos related to speaking skills during the flipped classes?
11. Did you find yourself bored or unfocused in audios and videos in the scheduled flipped classes?
12. Did you perform better academically in the flipped classroom model?
13. Did the flipped classroom model help you concentrate more when compared to the traditional model?
14. Would you like English speaking courses to be conducted in flipped classroom model?
15. Did you observe any positive changes in your attitude towards the flipped classroom model experience?