Impact of WhatsApp-Integrated Flipped Learning on Developing English Speech Acts of Requests: Students' Performance, Perception, and Acceptance

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Abstract

The paucity of studies that examine the effects of flipped learning on the development of speech acts of requests reflects a gap in the research. The research aimed to scrutinize the impact of flipped learning on the development of speech acts of request production among English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in Indonesia. 64 EFL learners were assigned to two groups: a flipped group and a control group. These students, comprising classes A and B, achieved the highest scores on the Test of Standard English (TSE). The participants in the flipped group received their course material through the WhatsApp app before attending class. During the in-class learning sessions, they honed their speech act of requests and improved their communicative proficiency. To assess their level of speech acts of requests and communicative ability, pre-and post-tests were conducted using the Discourse Completion Test (DCT). Additionally, self-report surveys and a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) questionnaire were used to gauge the learners' perceptions and acceptance of flipped learning. The results showed that the flipped group had higher post-test scores and greater engagement in learning activities compared to the control group. Participants in the flipped group appreciated the use of digital platforms through the WhatsApp application for learning and had a positive perception of the flipped learning activities. The results add to the literature on English communicative competence, particularly speech acts of requests, through the use of technology-based tools in a flipped learning setup.

Keywords: Flipped Learning; Indonesian EFL Learners; Speech Acts of Requests

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Introduction

In recent years, the approach to language teaching and learning has shifted towards a more communicative, student-centered approach that incorporates technology into education. Blended learning, which includes the approach of flipped learning, has emerged as a way to emphasize collaboration and student-centered learning (Satar, 2018; Yılmaz & Malone, 2020). Teachers produce pre-class materials in various formats, including videos or case studies, and students are required to familiarize themselves with these materials before attending the class (Kim et al., 2021; Liu & Zhang, 2022; Pardosi, 2021). During class hours, the focus is on collaborative activities, practices, presentations, and projects (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Gonzalez-Gomez et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2020a). This inverted learning process affords greater opportunities for learning and collaboration, both before, during, and after class (Heo & Chun, 2018; Lee & Eun, 2016; Öztürk & Çakıroğlu, 2021).

Even though they are often interchangeable, flipped learning and blended learning are different. Blended learning is a combination of online learning and the traditional classroom while flipped learning is inverted learning that provides pre-activities before class. The primary objective of flipped learning is to flip the conventional classroom format and thereby allocate more time for students to actively participate in learning activities (Ekici, 2021; Lin & Chen, 2016). This technology-based approach has been proven to be effective in enhancing language skills, higher-order thinking skills, learning engagement, achievement, satisfaction, autonomous learning, motivation, language skills, and idiomatic knowledge (Gonzalez-Gomez et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2022; Khodabandeh, 2022; Liu & Zhang, 2022; Makruf et al., 2021; Polat & Karabatak, 2022). Flipped learning also offers learners the flexibility to access course materials outside of class, regardless of time or location, as long as they have an internet connection (Brewer & Movahedazarhouligh, 2018; Haghegh & Nugroho, 2021). In conclusion, flipped learning has demonstrated various advantages for language acquisition as it offers flexibility in terms of time and location, as learners can access course content online.

The surge in research on flipped learning was triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many studies have shown that flipped learning was effective in facilitating blended learning during the pandemic (Amin & Sundari, 2020; Makki & Bali, 2021; Mutiaraningrum & Nugroho, 2020). The combined use of online learning and flipped instruction was found to improve students' performance, motivation, attention, and engagement (Huang et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2017; Zainuddin & Perera, 2019). Studies have also shown that students demand open access to flipped learning resources (Lo & Hew, 2021; Nerantzi, 2020; Tang et al., 2020). The results of these studies indicate that flipped learning is a viable approach for enhancing students' learning outcomes in a blended setting.

This model ease instructor in teaching since students already got exposure to the subject being studied. However, the instructor's role is crucial in flipped learning. Before implementing this model, the instructor should ensure that students understand how to watch the videos such as pausing and replaying as well as taking notes for important information (Brown, 2016). According to Basal (2015), O'Flaherty and Phillips (2015), and Youssef (2021), the role of the teacher in a flipped classroom has evolved from being solely a main controller, and provider of knowledge to serving as a guide, facilitator, and organizer. As the organizer of the class, instructors help problem-solve, guide learning, facilitate discussion, and clear misconceptions (Aydin & Demirer, 2016; Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Irianti et al., 2022; Liu, 2019).

The results of previous investigations have revealed the crucial role of flipped learning approach in improving English learners' cognitive achievements (e.g., Kim et al., 2021; Lin & Chen, 2016; Liu & Zhang, 2022). Nevertheless, so far, only the research of Haghighi et al. (2019) explored the effect of this learning approach on English learners' pragmatic competence through speech acts of refusals. Therefore, exploring the other facets of interlanguage pragmatics, such as other speech acts, is a worthwhile endeavor. In light of the positive impact of flipped learning on language learning, it would be beneficial to examine its efficacy in the realm of pragmatics, which plays a critical role in communicative competence. What distinguishes this study from Haghighi et al. (2019) is that while the latter study examined the possible impact of flipped learning on the appropriate utilization of speech acts of refusal, this present research investigates its empirical

effect on speech acts of requests among English language learners. Another point of distinction between this study and prior research is the utilization of the WhatsApp application to support the flipped learning process, while previous studies utilized the Telegram (Haghighi et al., 2019) and Line application (Chen Hsieh et al., 2017). In addition, a meticulous examination of the WhatsApp application in enhancing English learners' speech acts of requests in a flipped learning environment has rarely been addressed. As a result, this current study aims to bridge the gap by investigating the potential of the WhatsApp application, the most widely-used instant messaging platform in Indonesia, to improve the appropriate use of speech acts of requests among English language learners.

The present study was conducted to find out the impact of flipped learning instruction on the pragmatic competence of English language learners in conveying speech acts of requests and also examines the learners' perceptions of the flipped learning environment and the use of WhatsApp to support it. This study shed light on the effectiveness of flipped learning in enhancing EFL learners' language skills and understanding of the technology-enhanced teaching approach. Hence, the following research questions have been posed:

(1) Can WhatsApp-integrated flipped learning enhance English learners' appropriate use of speech acts of requests?

(2) How do English learners see WhatsApp-integrated flipped learning?

(3) To what extent do English learners accept the role of WhatsApp application to assist flipped learning?

Literature Review

Flipped Learning

The pillars of FLIP are a flexible environment, learning culture, intentional content, and professional education (Lawton, 2019). Flipped instruction emphasizes educational endeavors from within the classroom and toward pre-class activities, thereby fostering an out-of-class learning experience, and allowing for more in-class communication (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). The use of digital technology platforms for delivering course materials in pre-class activities is crucial for flipped instruction (Huang et al., 2022). By offering more time for students' communication and interaction, flipped classroom activities generate flourishing chances and exposure for students to obtain learning experience and reach better language knowledge and skills (Öztürk & Çakıroğlu, 2021; Polat & Karabatak, 2022). The success of this approach is contingent upon the students' proactive involvement in pre-class assignments and their engagement in in-class sessions (Wu et al., 2017). The successful application of flipped learning is necessary depending on the efficacy of technological platforms to facilitate the course materials and task delivery outside the classroom (Webb & Doman, 2020). Technology plays a vital role by facilitating the delivery of instructional materials, predominantly in the form of videos, as part of the pre-class activities (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). The increased time for learning in a flipped classroom can lead to improved understanding and deeper levels of cognitive ability.

Flipped instruction is closely connected to the crucial role of pre-class learning activities (Makruf et al., 2021). However, the essence of flipped instruction encompasses more than mere pre-class assignments and tasks posted on digital learning platforms (Polat & Karabatak, 2022). To summarize, the authors emphasize that the flipped instructional approach combines pre-class activities (such as video lessons, online practices, and so on) with in-class experiences (such as collaborative projects, discussions, etc.). In-class and pre-class activities are important for the success of a flipped classroom, with teacher and learner engagement being crucial (Fatemeh et al., 2020). It is justifiable to put forth the view that thorough pre-class tasks are necessary to prepare learners for active learning experiences in the class, thus increasing their readiness. The goal is to foster learner readiness through pre-class activities and facilitate active learning experiences in the class.

As cited from Tecnia Institute of Advanced Studies (2021), the elements of the flipped classroom are pre-class activities in the form of exposure before class to materials in the form of readings, videos, and so on; incentives in the form of assignments can vary and include online

quizzes, worksheets, and short writing assignments; assessment mechanism in the form of quizzes, and high cognition in the form of synthesis activities and data analysis. The website outlines several models for implementing a flipped classroom approach, including the Standard Inverted Classroom, the Discussion-Oriented Flipped Classroom, the Demonstration-Focused Flipped Classroom, the Faux-Flipped Classroom, the Group-Based Flipped Classroom, the Virtual Flipped Classroom, and the Flipping the Teacher model. The Standard Inverted Classroom involves students completing pre-class activities and practicing in the classroom, while the Discussion-Oriented Flipped Classroom involves students watching lecture videos and discussing them in class. The Demonstration-Focused Flipped Classroom provides video demonstrations before class for hands-on repetition in the classroom or laboratory. The Faux-Flipped Classroom gives students the freedom to review material at their own pace, while the Group-Based Flipped Classroom involves students working on lectures in groups in the classroom. In the Virtual Flipped Classroom, instructors provide lecture videos online and students collect assignments through the learning management system, and the Flipping the Teacher model involves students creating their lecture videos.

Despite its benefits, flipped learning also poses downsides as outlined by (Shi-Chun et al., 2014) including difficulties in testing, fluctuations in internet accessibility, a strong dependence on student motivation, the potential to create a laid-back learning environment, and the challenge of ensuring everyone stays focused on the same subject. In addition, (Aydin & Demirer, 2016) and (Greener, 2015) succinctly outlined the drawbacks of flipped learning, including increased demands on teachers, students' difficulty in transitioning from traditional classroom settings, and difficulties in monitoring students' completion of pre-class activities

Pragmatic Competence and Speech Acts of Requests

Pragmatic competence is a critical component of communicative competence, encompassing the ability to use language appropriately in a variety of situational contexts (Celce-Murcia, 2008; Savignon, 2018). Until the advent of Communicative Language Teaching, English language instruction primarily focused on linguistic structure and rote memorization of vocabulary in the target language (CLT) (Canale, 2014; Thamarana, 2015). CLT emerged to focus on the real context of communication, as the traditional approach of language teaching based on grammatical knowledge and vocabulary memorization was found insufficient for successful language learning (Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2017; Güneş & Ortaçtepe, 2019). Pragmatic competence is necessary for effective communication, as it entails the utilization of language following the context of the interaction (Estaji & Jahanshiri, 2022; Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016).

The notion of pragmatic competence is interconnected with the idea of language speech acts, particularly requests (Levinson, 2017). Speech acts pertain to the actions executed by speakers through their use of verbal expressions (Petrey, 2016). Requesting acts are the most commonly used speech acts in day-to-day communication. Requests are directive speech acts intended to get someone to do something, and they can be conveyed through direct, indirect, or conventionally indirect strategies (Levinson, 2017). The use of appropriate request strategies reflects the level of pragmatic competence (Hazaymeh & Altakhaineh, 2019; Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016). to address the issue at hand, this research endeavors to investigate the relationship between flipped learning methods and the effective use of request speech acts in English as a foreign language instruction.

Methodology

Research Design

Given that the objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of the flipped instructional approach on enhancing EFL learners' proficiency in making requests through speech acts, a quasi-experimental research design was employed. The research design enables researchers to conduct the required intervention in an amount of time to test the efficacy of a learning method (e.g., flipped learning) using a set of instrument pre-tests and post-tests. At first, all learners involved in this study were given a pre-test on Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to measure their levels of the appropriate use of requesting acts. Then, according to the results of the pre-test, they were divided into two groups (e.g., experimental and control), not by a random technique, but by considering

the equivalence composition of the pre-test results including low, middle, and high achievers. Therefore, both groups comprised students who were comparable in terms of their capability to effectively use speech acts of requests.

Participants

64 individuals learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at a public university in the Central Java province of Indonesia took part in this research project. Of the 156 students who took speaking courses, 64 students from two classes were selected for this study as they were the ones who utilized the flipped learning approach. They were selected based on their performance on the Test of Standard English (TSE), a TOEFL-like examination administered at the end of the first year at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia. Participants were randomly separated into two groups: a flipped group with 32 participants and a control group with 32 participants. The study aimed to assess the influence of a flipped learning environment on the improvement of the participants' mastery in utilizing speech acts of requests appropriately in English. The participants were taking a course called Speaking II during the second year of their study for a bachelor's degree at the university and had an average of 5 years of English study experience. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 22 with an average of 21 years old.

Instrumentation

The study employed three methods to gather information regarding the progression of the pragmatic ability of EFL learners: a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), a self-administered written survey, and a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) questionnaire. Initially, the DCT was used to assess the learners' proficiency in the usage of speech acts of requests and is a commonly used tool in linguistics and pragmatics for eliciting specific speech acts (Thuruvan & Yunus, 2017). It consists of a one-sided role play containing a situational prompt in which a participant produces a response accordingly. The DCT used in this study is a modified version of (Nugroho & Rekha, 2020), which measured the learners' ability to use appropriate request speech acts in English. The DCT consisted of 12 scenarios (Appendix A) scored by two native speaker raters on a 5-scale appropriateness score referring to the Request Appropriateness Rubric (Table 1). The final evaluation was calculated by averaging the scores of two assessors. To guarantee the consistency between the two raters, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted and revealed a strong correlation between the two raters in both pre-tests and post-tests, with coefficients of 0.82 and 0.84 respectively.

Table 1. Request Appropriateness Rubric (Taguchi, 2006)

Rating	Score	Criteria
Completely appropriate	5	The request expressions are fully appropriate based on the provided contextual situations
		The request expressions are free of grammatical mistakes
Mostly appropriate	4	The request expressions are almost suitable
		The request expressions comprise a small number of grammatical mistakes but are still understandable
Generally appropriate	3	The request expressions are somehow acceptable
		The request expressions comprise several grammatical mistakes
Not very appropriate but acceptable	2	The request expressions are not appropriate because of grammatical mistakes
Not appropriate and not acceptable	1	The request expressions are not understandable because of wrong responses and heavy grammatical mistakes
		No request expressions are produced

The second tool utilized was a written self-report survey to gauge the participant's perspective on the utilization of flipped learning in their English language classes and its effect on their learning of speech acts of requests. The survey consisted of 5 open-ended questions aimed at exploring the participants' experiences and opinions on the flipped learning approach (Appendix B). The survey was administered only to the members of the flipped learning group and was analyzed using qualitative methods by the researchers. The questions in the survey aimed to

explore the participants' thoughts on the comparison between flipped and traditional learning, any difficulties they faced, recommendations for improvement, their role in promoting their use of speech acts of requests, and the most enjoyable aspect of their flipped learning experience. The survey questions were reviewed and revised by two experts in English language teaching to ensure reliability.

The third tool employed was a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) questionnaire to examine the participants' acceptance of to use of the WhatsApp application as a tool for flipped learning activities. The TAM questionnaire, designed by Davis (1989) and later modified by Huang et al. (2012) to encompass both system and material characteristics, consisted of 24 statements evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree (Appendix C). The questionnaire explored the participants' perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude towards use, behavioral intention, and perception of the material and system characteristics of the WhatsApp application. The TAM questionnaire underwent review by two specialists within the domain of technology integration in English language instruction and demonstrated a reliability consistency of 0.81 as determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Procedure

The study involved two groups consisting of the flipped group and the control group. The pre-test of DCT for the two groups. The participants in the flipped group received an orientation on the flipped classroom environment and utilized WhatsApp as the digital platform for their learning activities. The participants in the 'control group' received equivalent instruction in a traditional classroom environment such as conversation, presentation, and group discussion. What makes it different is the control group did not use WhatsApp application or other technologies to facilitate outside-class activities. Their learning activities only focused on the in-class hours in the classroom. The flipped group was required to watch videos, analyze content, visit websites, and read materials before class while the control group only received instruction inside the class.

The flipped learning approach involves pre-class activities and in-class instructions. The course materials were distributed to the participants via a WhatsApp group one day before their in-class schedule and included short lecture videos, videos on recommended reading materials, websites request, and strategies. Then, the students were provided with a pre-class task that should be done either individually or in a group, such as summarizing, analyzing videos, problem-solving, and case study. Moreover, the in-class activities were designed to provide practice and exposure to communication and conversation through role-play, dialogues, peer/group feedback, and discussion sessions. The control group follows a similar learning approach, with course materials taught inside the classroom but without pre-class instructions through the WhatsApp application. The detailed procedure of this study is explained in Figure 1.

After conducting interventions, the participants were further asked to give their perception of studying English requests via flipped learning through a written self-report survey, and their attitude and acceptance toward the use of WhatsApp as the digital platform were measured using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) questionnaire.
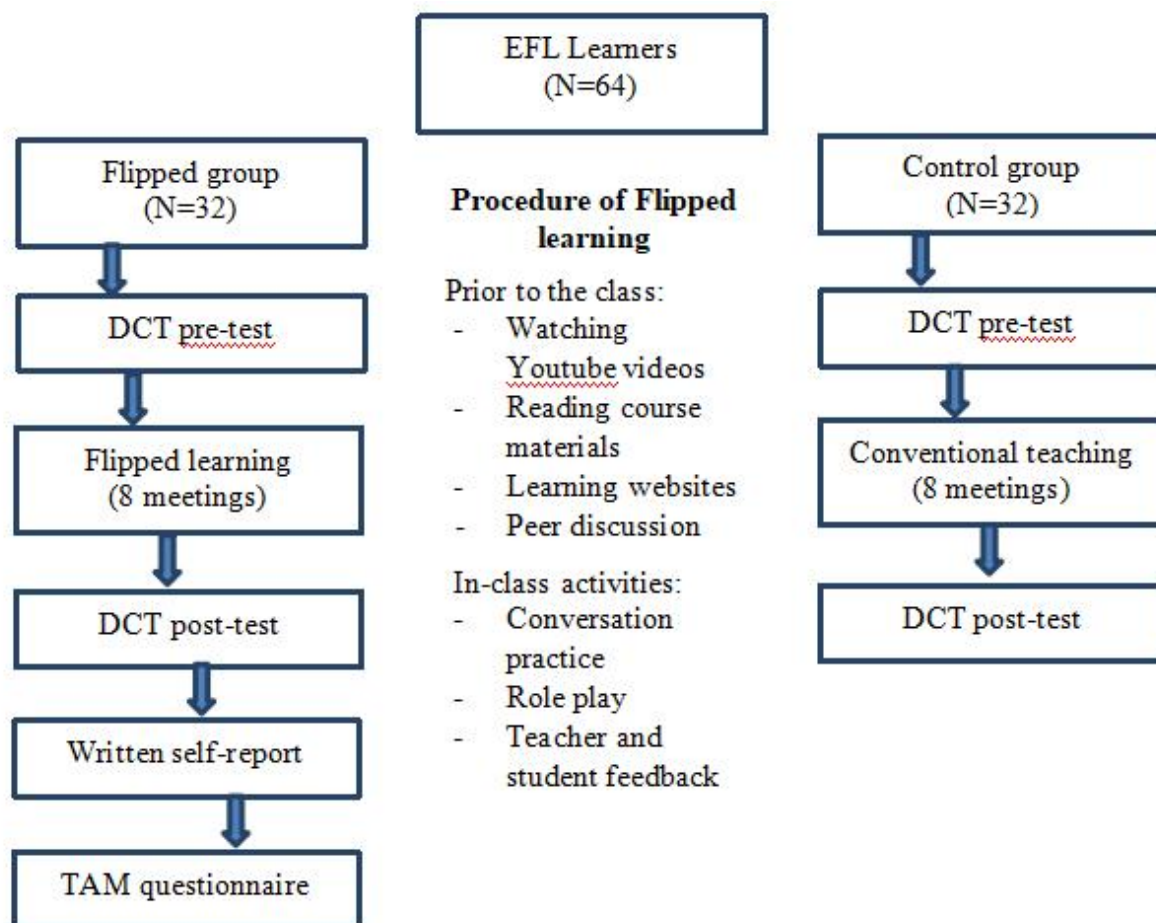
Figure 1. The procedure of this study

Data Analysis

The information gathered from the study participants was analyzed utilizing SPSS version 24. To search for advancements in pragmatic proficiency, both paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-tests were performed. To address the second research question on participants' perspectives on flipped learning, a qualitative examination of the written self-report survey was performed, and a consensus was reached through group discussion. For the third research question on participants' acceptance of WhatsApp in flipped learning, descriptive statistics were used to present the mean scores of each construct in the Technology Acceptance Model questionnaire filled out by the participants in the flipped group.

Results

Impact of Llipped Flearning on English Learners' Appropriate Use of Requests

Concerning the initial research question, the descriptive statistics conducted in Table 2 show that there was an improvement in both the flipped and control groups' scores on the DCT post-tests compared to the pre-tests. In detail, the mean score of the pre-tests of the experimental group was (26.80) and the post-test score was (44.70). Similarly, there was also an improvement in the mean score in the control group from (27.30) in the pre-test to (35.27) in the post-test. In short, the mean score of the post-tests in the flipped (experimental) group was higher (44.70) than that in the control group (35.27).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of pre-tests and post-tests of experimental and control group

	Modes	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Std. Error Mean**
Pre-test	Experimental	32	26.80	3.76	0.74
	Control	32	27.30	4.67	0.78
Post-test	Experimental	32	44.70	4.81	0.82
	Control	32	35.27	5.31	0.875

Moreover, Table 3 shows the results of a paired sample t-test comparing the pre-tests and post-tests of both experimental and control groups. The results indicate that the participants' mean scores in the post-tests were statistically significantly higher than the pre-tests, with p=0.000 (< 0.05). The mean score differences between the pre-tests and post-tests were (17.90) for the flipped group and (7.97) for the control group.

Table 3. Result of paired sample t-test

Paired differences				**95% Confidence interval of the difference**				
	Mean	**SD**	**Std. Error Mean**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Post-test - Pre-test	17.90	3.314	.671	16.620	19.180	21.190	28	.0001
Post-test - Pre-test	7.97	3.603	.654	6.690	9.250	12.782	28	.0001

Furthermore, to examine the significant difference between the students' mean scores of the post-tests of both groups, an independent sample t-test was conducted. Table 4 showed that the mean score of the post-test in the flipped group was significantly higher (44.70; p=0.0001) than that in the control group (35.27; p=0.0001). This indicates the flipped and regular (non-flipped) learning methods are effective in promoting the participants' development of speech acts of requests. However, the flipped learning environment was found to be more effective, resulting in a (17.90) improvement in mean scores, compared to the control group's improvement of (7.97) (Table 3). Therefore, the study concluded that the flipped learning environment was a promising approach for augmenting the effective utilization of requesting acts among English as a Foreign Language learners.

Table 4. Result of independent sample t-test

Mode	**N**	**M**	**SD**	**t-test for equality of means**		
				t	**df**	**Sig.**
Experimental	32	44.70	4.61	4.78	30	.000
Control	32	35.27	5.82			

English Learners' Perceptions Toward Flipped Learning

To answer the second research question, the results of the self-report survey showed that EFL learners held a positive view of flipped learning as a means to improve their pragmatic competence in making requests. The predominant portion of participants held the belief that the flipped learning environment held potential as a viable alternative for developing their ability to make requests in English and resulting in increased engagement. The participant's responses in the written self-report survey showed mostly positive views on the use of flipped learning.

S11: "It was a very interesting experience for me to learn the English language in a flipped learning activity. I could watch videos, read course materials, and share with friends before attending the class. These activities help me to promote my understanding of the learning

materials."

S23: "I think flipped learning is more fascinating than a regular class. We often feel bored in the regular class, but with prior-to-class activities in flipped learning, I rather feel enjoy because we have a lot of exposure to discuss, practice, and make conversation with friends and lecturer."

Moreover, some participants reported facing challenges such as increased time and effort requirements, difficulty in following due to busy schedules, and a slow internet connection, in implementing flipped learning activities. The self-report survey also revealed some challenges faced by the participants. Several participants (S1 and S10) mentioned that their daily schedule often resulted in them being tardy in participating in pre-class tasks. Moreover, some participants (S13 and S24) cited slow internet connectivity as an issue.

S1: "I think flipped learning is good, but it needs a lot of time to follow. I am often late in joining pre-class activities through WhatsApp group because I do another agenda."

S10: "The problem with flipped activities is that it takes too much time and effort because we have to prepare course materials even since the class has not yet begun."

S13: "Since I lived in a disadvantaged area, my problem is with the internet connection. I often have to go to public space (with a good internet connection) to download videos or course materials sent by the lecturer."

The self-report survey indicated that there is room for improvement in the flipped learning environment. Based on the feedback from participants S4 and S16, incorporating more active student involvement during discussions and incorporating more communicative activities and tasks could help improve the flipped learning experience. These suggestions could potentially increase student engagement and participation, leading to a more effective flipped learning experience.

S4: "My suggestion to improve flipped learning is that other students should be more active in the discussion and dialogue activities, particularly in pre-class activities through the WhatsApp group."

S16: "The activities are good enough, but I think the lecturer could design more communicative tasks and learning activities, so the students are more actively engaged in the activities."

Based on the participants' responses, flipped learning appears to have been effective in enhancing their pragmatic competence. The use of a flipped learning approach in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) resulted in ample opportunities for learners to practice and be exposed to the appropriate use of speech acts of requests. The implementation of activities allowed for an adequate amount of time for learners to prepare and rehearse before and during class, enhancing the overall effectiveness of this approach.

S32: "It [flipped learning] is effective according to my learning experience. It gives me opportunities to do a lot of practice on giving and refusing speech acts of requests. What makes it even more effective is that we can see the example in the real context of communication through videos."

S27: "I like the activities before the class. They give me the motivation to learn more and engage in the activities given by the lecturer. The pre-class activities in the WhatsApp group facilitate me to do some kind of practices and rehearsal as a preparation for in-class activities."

Concerning the most favorite aspect of flipped learning instruction, the participants favored the innovative design, dynamic delivery, and communicative nature of the activities. This suggests that incorporating these elements can contribute to a positive perception of the blended learning model.

S25: "The most favorite part of flipped learning activity is that I can watch videos and learn other course materials before class. It gives me the motivation to engage in learning activities."

S16: "I like it [flipped learning] because it is relatively new for me. It gives me a different learning experience."

S19: "My favorite part is when having discussion and dialogue practices about delivering

requests in English with my classmates."

English Learners' Acceptance of the Use of WhatsApp Application in Flipped Learning

The results of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) questionnaire indicate a positive disposition among participants towards utilizing WhatsApp for language learning, particularly in fostering pragmatic competence through the proper application of requesting behaviors. The descriptive statistics of the TAM questionnaire are displayed in Table 5. This suggests that incorporating WhatsApp as a tool to facilitate flipped learning is well-received by the participants, potentially leading to a more effective learning experience.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the TAM questionnaire

Construct	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	N of Items
Perceived ease of use	4.15	.51	3	5	4
Behavioral intention	3.95	.46	2	5	4
Attitude toward usage	3.92	.43	2	5	4
System characteristics	3.43	.41	2	5	4
Perceived usefulness	4.24	.56	3	5	4
Material characteristics	3.51	.47	2	5	4

The study's findings show that participants have a positive attitude toward using WhatsApp for language education. Perceived usefulness (mean score of 4.24), perceived ease of use (mean score of 4.15), behavioral intention (mean score of 3.95), attitude toward usage (mean score of 3.92), material attributes (mean score of 3.51), and system attributes were the most highly rated constructs (mean score of 3.43). Participants recognized WhatsApp's advantages in promoting a flipped learning environment and thought it was a promising digital tool for language education. The familiarity with the use of WhatsApp, combined with the participants' willingness to continuously engage in learning through the application, supports its integration into the language curriculum. The instructor's instructional materials, which included video lectures and web-based resources, improved the participants' language proficiency and pragmatic proficiency, with a focus on their ability to effectively use speech acts of request. The use of WhatsApp allowed for highly interactive learning both before and during class and helped to develop the participants' production of speech acts of requests. Overall, the results demonstrate that the participants exhibit a positive attitude towards incorporating WhatsApp and flipped learning into language education.

Discussion

The results of the present investigation indicate that the flipped classroom setup enhances the pragmatic proficiency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students through the utilization of request speech acts. This is due to the nature of flipped learning activities, which provide ample opportunities for exposure and practice in language learning (Heo & Chun, 2018). The pre-lesson tasks, which include video viewing, online education, material perusal, and peer discussion, provide an educational experience that helps English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners improve their understanding of the materials (Liu & Zhang, 2022; Makruf et al., 2021). Meanwhile, in a flipped learning approach, hands-on and interactive activities during in-class sessions help to advance students' pragmatic competence (Fatemeh et al., 2020). The results indicate that the flipped learning environment was successful in this study due to the student's active participation in both pre-class and in-class activities, facilitated by the utilization of the WhatsApp application.

Furthermore, the findings of this study support WhatsApp's efficacy as a digital tool for enhancing English learners' appropriate use of requesting acts. According to the findings of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) survey, study participants had a positive attitude toward using WhatsApp for language instruction, including improving the appropriate use of request speech acts. The findings of the perceived usefulness and ease of use dimensions revealed that participants recognized WhatsApp's benefits in fostering a flipped learning environment. With

high behavioral intention and attitude toward usage, most participants agreed to continue using WhatsApp for language learning. The course materials and system characteristics also had a positive impact on the participants' language proficiency and pragmatic competence. These findings suggest that WhatsApp can be used as a successful digital platform for language learning, particularly in enhancing pragmatic competence through the utilization of speech acts of requests. This conclusion aligns with the previous research (Alamer & Al Khateeb, 2021; Chen Hsieh et al., 2017) that WhatsApp is widely accepted as an effective platform for language learning activities, such as vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and writing.

This study provides evidence for the positive impact of the flipped classroom on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' pragmatic proficiency, particularly in terms of the appropriate use of request speech acts. The study also suggests that EFL learners perceive the flipped learning environment positively and acknowledge its effectiveness in enhancing their language skills. The results of this study, along with previous research (Chen Hsieh et al., 2017; Gonzalez-Gomez et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2022; Öztürk & Çakıroğlu, 2021), support the shift from traditional teaching and learning models to more innovative and student-centered approaches, such as flipped learning. The integration of flipped learning in the English language teaching syllabus and curriculum is highly recommended to promote the efficacy of language learning (Webb & Doman, 2020).

Overall, flipped learning approach in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) has shown positive results in students who use digital technology for learning activities in their daily life. The study suggests that most EFL learners are well-prepared due to pre-class activities, but workload and time consumption pose challenges. To overcome these difficulties, teachers must play a crucial role in designing effective flipped learning activities, monitoring the process, providing feedback and assistance, and solving problems that may arise. The goal is to enhance the EFL learners' interlanguage pragmatics.

Conclusion

In summary, this study examines the effect of flipped learning on the performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in terms of their utilization of request speech acts in English. The study utilized WhatsApp as the digital platform for flipped learning and found that it was effective in enhancing learners' speech acts. Results from self-written surveys and the Technology Acceptance Model questionnaire showed positive attitudes towards flipped learning and the use of WhatsApp as a platform. The study provides evidence that flipped learning is an effective instructional method for improving speech acts in EFL learners. Despite the compelling results, the limitations of this study include the small sample size of only the researchers' students, which may limit the generalizability of the results. To further validate the findings, replication studies with a larger sample size are recommended. Future studies should also look into the effect of flipped learning on interlanguage pragmatics with a more extensive participant group.

Acknowledgment

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Appendix A (Part of Pre-test and Post-test on DCT)

Situation 1

It is about 9 PM. You are working on a campus project and it must be submitted by tomorrow morning. A new neighbour about your age with the gender same as you, whom you do not already know, is playing music very loudly. You are disturbed since you could not concentrate on your work, and you want him/her to turn down the music volume. What will you say?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Situation 2

You are having dinner at a restaurant with your friends. At the moment you finish your meals, you realize that you are running out of water. At the same time, you are seeing a waiter walking in front of you. You want a waiter to give more water. What will you say to the waiter?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B (Written Self-report survey questions)

(1) According to your opinion, how do you see flipped learning instruction compared with your regular class?

(2) What problems/challenges did you encounter during the flipped learning instruction?

(3) What improvements can we make to enhance the effectiveness of flipped learning?

(4) Do flipped learning provide significant contribution to the development of your appropriate use of speech acts of requests?

(5) What was your most favorite part of the flipped learning activities?

Appendix C (Part of Technology acceptance model questionnaire)

All items were measured using 5-point Likert-scale starting from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly disagree).

System Characteristics (SC)

SC 1: I think WhatsApp gives a realistic learning environment for doing learning activities.

SC 2: I can use WhatsApp to conduct communication with my classmates and my teacher effectively.

SC 3: I feel more comfortable having communication with my classmates and my teacher through WhatsApp, instead of face-to-face.

SC 4: I can use WhatsApp to support my learning activity to develop speech acts of requests.

Material Characteristics (MC)

MC 1: I think the course materials in pre-class made me learn better how to deliver speech acts of requests in English.

MC 2: I think course videos and other materials in pre-class sending via WhatsApp by our teacher made me learn better how to deliver REQUEST in English.

MC 3: I think course videos and other materials in pre-class sending via WhatsApp by our teacher were useful for improving my oral English proficiency.

MC 4: I think course videos and other materials in pre-class sending via WhatsApp by our teacher helped me to learn the important point of the course.

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)

PEU 1: WhatsApp offers clear guidance on how to get the course materials (open, download, share)

PEU 2: Performing learning activities through WhatsApp is simple and does not take a lot of time.

PEU 3: Learning activities through WhatsApp are not difficult to follow.

PEU 4: WhatsApp provides easiness to facilitate communication between students and teacher.

Perceived Usefulness (PU)

PU 1: Learning through WhatsApp helped me to fluently speak English, particularly delivering requests.

PU 2: Learning through WhatsApp motivates me to practice speech acts of requests.

PU 3: Learning using WhatsApp provides me significant benefits to enhance my English ability.

PU 4: Comments and suggestions given by my classmates and my teachers through WhatsApp are helpful for me to enhance my English ability.

Attitude toward Use (ATU)

ATU 1: I like using WhatsApp to learn English

ATU 2: I have a positive attitude toward the use of WhatsApp in this course.

ATU 3: I think that using WhatsApp is a good choice to learn English.

ATU 4: I will often use WhatsApp to facilitate my learning and practice of English.

Behavioral Intention (BI)

BI 1: If I access to WhatsApp, I will continue using it to learn and practice English.

BI 2: I will regularly use WhatsApp for educational purposes, especially developing my

English ability.

BI 3: If I access WhatsApp someday, I will use it to convey requests to others in English.

BI 4: When I use WhatsApp in the future, I will feel more confident to use English.