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Effectiveness of the Flipped Classroom Model in Enhancing English Language Skills among High School Students: Evidence from the Gampaha Education Zone, Sri Lanka

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Abstract— *This study investigates how effectively the Flipped Classroom model enhances the overall English language proficiency of high school students in the Gampaha Education Zone of Sri Lanka. English language proficiency in this study refers to students' competencies in reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary. It employs a quantitative research approach and utilizes a quasi-experimental methodology involving both an experimental group (n=348) and a control group (n=329). A pre-test administered prior to the intervention and a post-test conducted afterward assess the degree of language improvement. The intervention lasted approximately four months, and students in the experimental group were provided with instructional video materials as part of the flipped classroom approach before attending in-class learning activities. The results are based on paired sample t-tests and two-way mixed ANOVA. The analysis results indicate that the experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in their post-test scores, with a mean difference of 6.09. Conversely, the control group exhibited a slight negative significant change in their post-test scores, showing a mean difference of -0.63. All interactions, group effects, and time effects are statistically significant according to ANOVA analysis, with p-values below 0.05 for all three factors. The research concludes that the flipped classroom approach has a significant and positive effect on the development of English language skills among high school students when compared to conventional classroom methods. This study addresses the lack of experimental research on school-level blended learning in Sri Lanka, focusing on the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model in enhancing students' learning experiences. This finding provides evidence to support the integration of technology-enhanced, student-centered pedagogies in national education policy.*

Keywords— *English Language Proficiency, Flipped Classroom Model, High School Students, Pre-test and Post-test, Quasi-experimental method*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human capital development has become a key priority for countries that want to compete in a globalized and knowledge-based economy. Education systems play an important role in equipping students with the skills they need for jobs and social mobility. In this context, improving educational quality and language skills has become a major focus of education reforms in many developing countries, including Sri Lanka.

Recognizing this need, the Government of Sri Lanka, along with the World Bank, launched the General Education Modernization Project (GEMP) in 2018. This project aims to strengthen the general education system and improve learning outcomes. One key goal is to enhance English language skills among school students since limited English abilities have been identified as a significant barrier to employability for Sri Lankan youth (Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2017).

Despite learning English for over a decade in school, the pass rate for the General English paper of the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) Advanced Level Examination remains low and stagnated. The Department of Examinations reported a minimal variation and stagnation of the pass percentage from 54% to 59% over the last six years (Fig. 1). This shows a gap between expected language skills and actual learning results. According to the EF English

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Proficiency Index, Sri Lanka is ranked 73rd globally in 2025 with low English proficiency.

One factor contributing to this issue is the ongoing use of traditional teacher-centered teaching methods, which often limit student interaction and engagement in the learning process. In response, educators are increasingly looking into new teaching approaches that encourage student-centered learning.

The flipped classroom model (FCM) has emerged as one such method. It combines technology with traditional instruction to improve classroom engagement. In a flipped classroom, students receive instructional materials like videos or online lectures before class. Classroom time is then used for interactive learning activities, discussions, and group work. This model shifts the focus from passive listening to active participation and allows teachers to support deeper learning during class. Previous research has shown that the FCM can significantly boost student engagement and academic performance.

With growing interest in flipped learning, this study examines how effective the FCM is in improving English language learning outcomes among high school students in Sri Lanka. Specifically, it investigates whether students' scores change significantly from pre-test to post-test in both experimental and control groups, whether learning outcomes improve with the FCM, and whether flipped instruction leads to greater improvements compared to traditional teaching methods. By comparing the performance of students exposed to flipped learning with those taught through conventional methods, the study aims to provide evidence on the effectiveness of the FCM in enhancing learning outcomes in English language education.

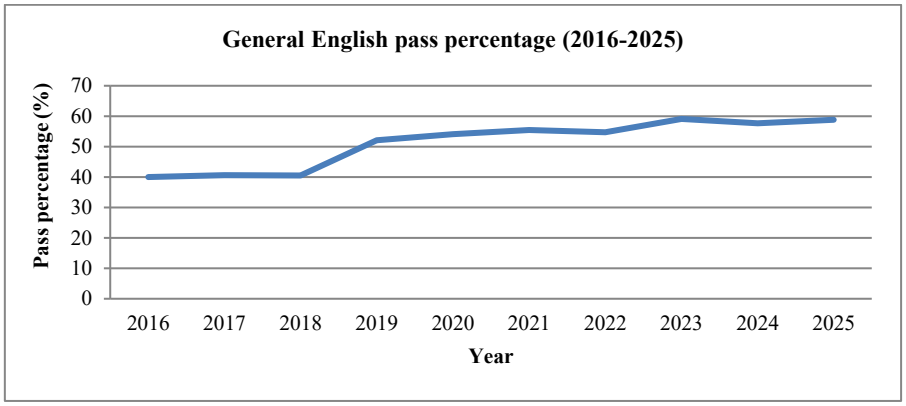

Fig. 1 Pass – rate pattern of General English in the G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination (2016–2025)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. English Language Proficiency

Enhanced communication skills in English can result in not only an improved social life but also better job opportunities in the future (Pandey & Pandey, 2014). English is the dominant language in global business, enabling effective communication in diverse, professional, and technical fields. Therefore, English proficiency is a critical determinant of employability for high school students, acting as a gateway to better job opportunities, higher salaries, and international career mobility (Raju & Krishna, 2018). English is the dominant language in Sri Lanka, despite the two national languages, especially for education, employment, business, and tourism. It is a mandatory subject in all schools, and proficiency in English is required for university acceptance due to almost all the universities conducting teaching in the English medium. Although teaching English as a second language to all school children has been a key social policy of successive governments of Sri Lanka since the early 1950s, Census of Population and Housing data indicate that English literacy is just 22% among Sri Lanka's population above 15 years of age (Abayasekara, 2018).

B. Findings of Flipped Learning

Traditional English teaching methods used in high schools are characterized by teacher-centered

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instruction, rote memorization, and grammar-translation (Hussain et al., 2010), often result in low student motivation, engagement, shallow comprehension (Manvi & Giri, 2014), and poor communication skills. The FCM is a prominent blended learning strategy reversing traditional instruction to use class time for active, collaborative, and student-centered learning (Utami et al., 2023). It is based on online video and audio lectures provided out of the class (Saira et al., 2021), and the problem-solving discussion sessions are conducted in the classroom. In the flipped classroom, teachers are implementing differentiated instruction, problem/project-based learning, and inquiry-based study, so flipped learning is fundamentally learner-centric (Bergmann & Sams, 2014; with Aslowat, 2016).

Manjaree et al. (2023) examined the implementation of the FCM within Sri Lanka's difficult economic and political context to improve educational resilience. The study emphasizes the importance of staff preparation and training to optimize the outcomes of the FCM in challenging circumstances such as COVID-19. Perera & Silva (2017) implemented the FCM in their teaching of medical microbiology, and the FCM was shown to be more effective than traditional lectures. Upananda & Upananda (2025) came up with a similar conclusion by utilizing the flipped classroom approach to assess its effect on student engagement among first-year management undergraduates at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Dahanayake and Abeywickrama (2022) explored teachers' viewpoints, but not the effectiveness of the model in school level implementation.

The FCM has many advantages for both the individual learning process and the in-class learning process (Ayçiçek & Yelken, 2017). Students can access lecture videos whenever and wherever they want, and it provides students with the ability to learn at their own speed (Fulton, 2012). Students are encouraged to think both within and out of class (Kellinger, 2012; with Ayçiçek & Yelken, 2017). However, one of the disadvantages of the model is the difficulties that may occur when the students do not watch the videos before coming to the class (Bristol, 2014; with Ayçiçek & Yelken, 2017). The biggest challenge for teachers is not preparing or broadcasting lecture videos but preparing in-class activities and integrating them into the flipped classroom approach (Lafee, 2013).

C. Flipped Learning in Enhancing English Language Skills

Abdullah et al. (2019) explored the implementation of the FCM, examining its effectiveness on the English-speaking performance of students. Their findings indicated a gradual increase in student involvement, willingness to engage in English conversational tasks, and overall commitment to improving their speaking abilities. Similarly, Afrilyasanti et al. (2017) investigated Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' perceptions regarding the FCM. They concluded that the activities incorporated within this model enhanced the students' writing skills. Additionally, Ahmad (2016) assessed the impact of the FCM on the listening comprehension abilities of Egyptian EFL students, revealing a significant positive effect on their comprehension skills. These studies collectively highlight the potential benefits of the FCM in enhancing various aspects of language proficiency among English language learners.

Ayçiçek and Yelken (2017) investigated the impact of the FCM on students' engagement during English instruction. Their findings indicated a significant improvement in the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, while the control group did not demonstrate a similar progression. Based on these results, it is recommended that educators implement the FCM to foster increased engagement in the classroom.

In a related study, Nanclares and Rodríguez (2016) explored student satisfaction with a blended instructional design, highlighting the effectiveness of the FCM in higher education settings. Smallhorn (2017) also applied the FCM as a strategy to enhance student engagement, focusing primarily on attitudes towards the learning process rather than academic achievement. The study findings revealed that there was a notable increase in student engagement and a favourable disposition towards this instructional method; however, measurable improvements in student learning outcomes were not observed.

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III.METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The participants of this study were selected from existing classes, and random assignment to groups was not feasible in the actual educational setting. Therefore, a quasi-experimental research design was employed to examine the effectiveness of the FCM on students' English learning outcomes. The study consisted of two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was instructed through the FCM and the control group was taught through traditional teaching approaches.

B. Participants and Sampling

The study was implemented in the Gampaha education zone in Sri Lanka[1], which comprises 67 high schools. From these high schools, 10 are chosen at random for the study. All selected 10 schools are mixed schools with both boys and girls studying in the same classroom. They are the students in grade 12 with the age around 17 years old. Within one high school, there are several parallel classrooms ranging from 2 to 12.

Consequently, one classroom in a school was designated as the experimental group to implement the FCM, while another parallel classroom served as the control group, using the traditional classroom model. The classrooms were selected through convenience sampling, as the same teacher instructed both parallel classes, ensuring consistency in instructional delivery. Different measures were taken to handle the equivalence and to minimize the contaminations. Both chosen classrooms of the same school were instructed by the same teacher. Therefore, the teaching style of the teacher doesn't affect the finding other than the difference of teaching model. The students selected in both classes study the same subject stream for the G.C.E. Advanced level examination. It ensures there is no effect or similar effect of other subjects to develop the English language skills of both groups. The same flipped materials and activities were shared with all experimental groups with the supervision of Regional English Support Centre (RESC)[2] trainers to keep the equivalence within the experimental group.

TABLE I: TOTAL NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS

Test	Number of observations		Total number of observations
	Experimental group	Control group	
Pre-test	348	329	677
Post-test	348	329	677

C. Intervention Procedure

The structure of flipped classroom and traditional classroom interventions are shown in Fig.2.

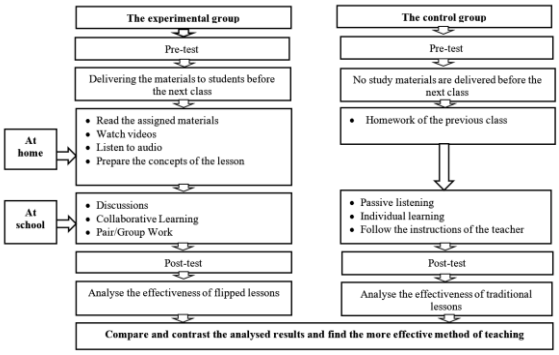

Fig.2 Structure of the flipped classroom intervention

Students' proficiency in the English language was typically assessed using six criteria: reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, listening, and speaking. Pre-tests and post-tests were developed to evaluate English language proficiency in each of these areas by a group of In-Service Advisors (ISAs)[3], RESC trainers, and

[1] In Sri Lanka, school education is administratively divided into 100 education zones under the Ministry of Education. The Gampaha Education Zone, located in the Gampaha District of the Western Province Sri Lanka, is one of the major zones responsible for managing 144 schools and implementing education policies at the regional level.

[2] In Sri Lanka, Regional English Support Centers (RESCs) are specialized units established under the Ministry of Education Sri Lanka to enhance the quality of English language teaching and learning across the country. These centers serve as resource and training hubs for English teachers.

[3] In Sri Lanka, In-Service Advisors (ISAs) are experienced educators appointed by the Ministry of Education Sri Lanka to provide continuous professional support and guidance to school teachers at the zonal level. They are specialize in specific subjects and their primary role is to improve the quality of teaching and learning by conducting teacher training workshops, classroom observations, demonstration

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English language teachers. Pilot testing of both pre-test and post-test papers was done with the group of 50 students in the same grade of high schools not participating in the research group. Reliability analysis of the tests was done through correlation analysis, and difficulty testing was done using a difficulty index. Then the initial data of the research are gathered by administering the same pre-test to both the experimental and control groups before implementing the FCM.

The ten teachers selected in the study were given training and practical experience of FCM for 30 hours in RESC, Gampaha prior the intervention. The intervention was implemented over approximately four months. Selected lessons from the first four units of the General English curriculum were redesigned according to the Flipped Classroom approach. Students in the experimental group received instructional videos before attending classroom sessions. Video durations ranged from approximately 1 to 16 minutes depending on lesson content (TABLE 2). Classroom activities included group discussions, pair work, collaborative projects, presentations, activity sheets, and problem-solving exercises. Meanwhile, the control group continued traditional classroom learning, characterized primarily by lectures, note-taking, and individual learning activities.

TABLE 2: PRE-CLASS VIDEOS FOR FLIPPED LESSONS

Unit	Number of videos	Lengths of videos (minutes)
Unit 1	3	3.25, 1.25, 8.46
Unit 2	5	3.56, 3.52, 2.42, 8.41, 2.42
Unit 3	4	1.52, 6.57, 7.05, 15.16
Unit 4	3	2.22, 4.42, 5.16

D. Data Collection and Analysis

Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure students' English language proficiency before and after the intervention. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, paired sample t-tests, Levene's test, Welch's t-test, and two-way mixed ANOVA. These analyses were used to examine within-group improvements, between-group differences, and interaction effects.

lessons, and providing feedback on pedagogy and curriculum implementation.

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

A. Descriptive Statistics

The summary statistics (TABLE 3) present the descriptive analysis of the students' pre-test and post-test scores in both experimental and control groups. The results indicate that the experimental group showed a noticeable improvement in mean scores; in contrast, the control group demonstrated a slight decline in performance. These descriptive findings provide initial evidence that the FCM contributed positively to enhancing students' English language learning outcomes before conducting further inferential statistical analyses.

TABLE 3: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Group	n	Pre_mean	Post_mean	Pre_sd	Post_sd
Experimental	348	30.74713	36.83908	8.216408	8.028944
Control	329	30.79331	30.16109	8.035733	7.390349

Fig. 3 presents the interaction between pre-test and post-test for both groups. The experimental group showed a noticeable increase in post-test scores compared to the control group, indicating the positive impact of the flipped classroom intervention on students' English language proficiency.

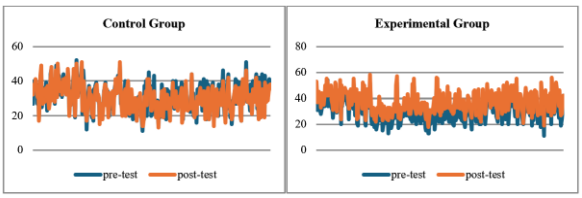

Fig.3 Pre-test and post-test score distribution of control and experimental groups

B. Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted to assess the assumptions required for statistical testing, including normality and homogeneity of variance.

Q–Q plots were separately employed to assess the normality of pre-control, pre-experimental, post-control and post-experimental groups. For all groups the points lie closely along the reference line,

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especially in the middle range of the distribution, ensuring the normal distribution of data (Fig. 4).

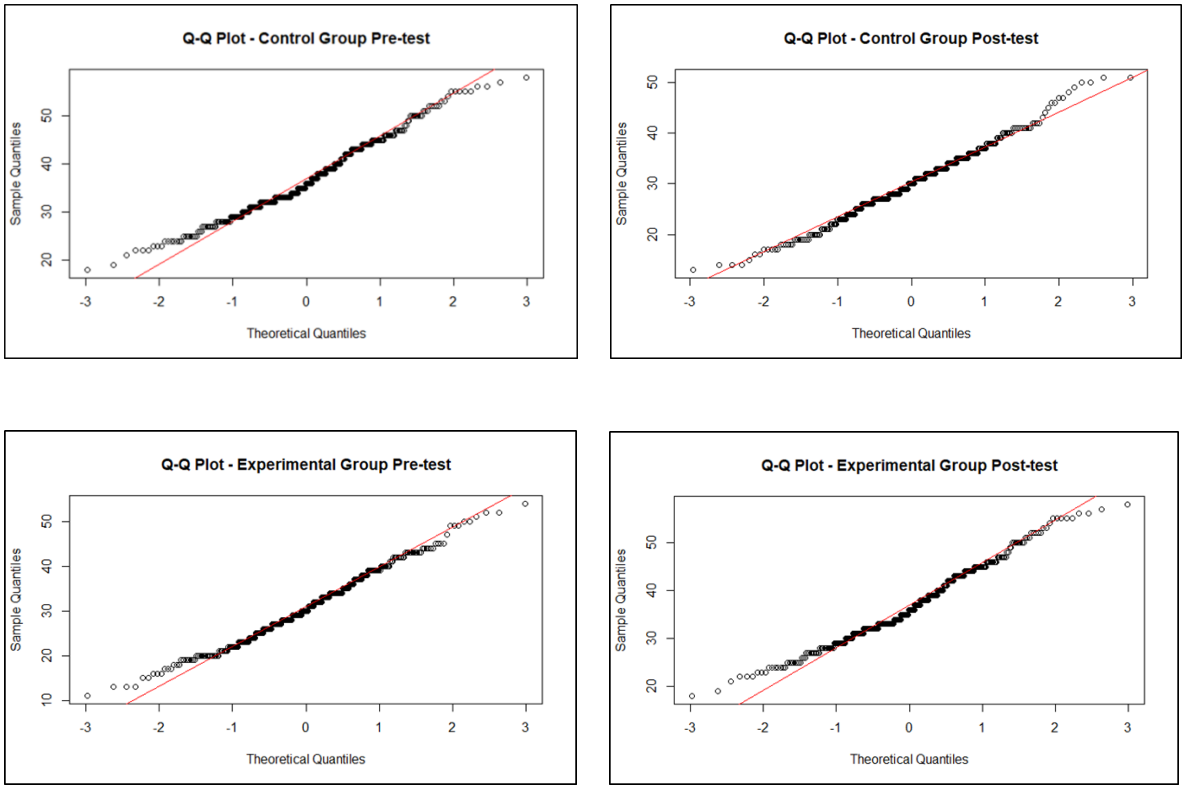

Fig. 4 Q-Q plots of control and experimental groups for pre-test and post-test scores

Levene's test is used to assess the equality of variances between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The test produced an F-value of 0.1565 with a corresponding p-value of 0.6925, which is greater than 0.05, indicating the assumption of homogeneity of variance is satisfied for pre-test scores. Additionally, Welch's t-test was conducted as a robustness check, and the results were consistent, confirming the reliability of the findings of Levene's test. The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the groups at baseline (TABLE 4).

TABLE 4: LEVENE'S TEST AND WELCH'S T-TEST FINDINGS

Test	F-value	t-value	p-value
Levene's Test	0.1565		0.6925
Welch's t-test		0.07	0.94

C. Within Group Analysis

The paired sample t-test results demonstrated substantial improvement in both groups following the intervention. The test produced a value of t (347) = 34.64, with a p-value less than 0.001 for the experimental group. The mean difference between the two time points was 6.09, indicating that, on average, students in the experimental group improved their scores by more than six points.

The results indicated a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores, with a test value of t (328) = −3.44 and a p-value of 0.000652 for the control group. However, unlike the experimental group, the mean difference was −0.63,

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indicating a slight decrease in scores from pre-test to post-test.

TABLE 5: SUMMARY STATISTICS OF WITHIN GROUP ANALYSIS

	t-value	p-value	mean difference	Significance
Experimental group (pre vs. post)	34.639	< 2.2e-16*	6.091954	Significant increase
Control group (pre vs. post)	-3.4421	0.000652*	-0.6322188	Significant decrease

D. Two-Way Mixed ANOVA

To investigate the combined influence of time (pre-test vs. post-test) and group (experimental vs. control) on students' language performance, a two-way mixed ANOVA was conducted. The analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect of time, F (1, 675) = 461.36, p < .001. This result indicates that, when considering all participants collectively, there was a substantial difference between pre-test and post-test scores. In practical terms, this finding suggests that participants' language performance changed significantly over the duration of the study. The magnitude of this effect implies that the progression from pre-test to post-test was not due to random variation, but rather reflects a meaningful change in scores across time.

A statistically significant main effect of group was also observed, F (1, 675) = 30.91, p < .001. This finding indicates that, when averaging across both time points, there was a significant difference in performance between the experimental and control groups. This suggests that one group consistently outperformed the other, regardless of whether the scores were from the pre-test or post-test. Such a difference may reflect the influence of the instructional method or treatment applied to the experimental group, highlighting a general disparity between the two groups in terms of language performance.

Importantly, the interaction effect between time and group was found to be highly significant, F(1, 675) = 699.80, p < .001. This result indicates that the pattern of change in scores over time was significantly different for the experimental and control groups. In other words, the degree and direction of improvement from pre-test to post-test were not the same across the two groups. This suggests that the experimental condition had a distinct impact on participants' learning outcomes compared to the control condition. The effect size for the interaction (generalized eta squared, ges = .043) indicates a moderate practical significance, suggesting that the FCM had a meaningful and measurable impact on students' learning outcomes.

TABLE 6: TWO-WAY MIXED ANOVA RESULTS

	Effect	DFn	DFd	SSn	SSd	F	p	p<.05	ges
1	(Intercept)	1	675	1397131.289	81201.365	11613.88877	0.000000e+00	*	0.94272067
2	group	1	675	3718.941	81201.365	30.91432	3.887064e-08	*	0.04197067
3	time	1	675	2520.575	3687.778	461.35862	2.165231e-78	*	0.02883633
4	group: time	1	675	3823.263	3687.778	699.79885	2.330508e-106	*	0.04309728

V. DISCUSSION

The findings revealed a substantial and statistically significant improvement in the experimental group's performance from pre-test to post-test. The magnitude of the increase was notably large, with a mean gain of more than six points (30.74 to 36.83). This level of improvement indicates that the FCM had a strong and consistent positive effect on students' language proficiency. One possible explanation for this improvement lies in the structure of the FCM itself. Alsowat (2016) came up with a similar finding and explained that the outclass activities gave students the chance to review the lesson and had a clear idea about the content and learning materials at their own pace.

In contrast to the experimental group, the control group did not demonstrate improvement. Instead, a slight but statistically significant decline in performance was observed. The mean of the scores from pre to post has slightly decreased from 30.79 to 30.16. Although the magnitude of this decline was

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relatively small, it is nevertheless noteworthy because it indicates that the traditional teaching method did not facilitate progress in language proficiency over the study period. In this study's context, it can be inferred that 'General English' is not a mandatory subject for attaining a higher z-score[4] in the G.C.E. Advanced level exam. Consequently, students primarily concentrate on the three compulsory subjects, with their attention toward these subjects increasing progressively, while their focus on General English diminishes. However, research results show that FCM has the potential to enhance students' interest in the subject and improve their outcomes. Additionally, this might explain the decline in the mean score of the control group's post-test. Students neglect learning English, leading to a gradual deterioration of their language skills over time. The observed divergence suggests that the FCM not only enhances learning but may also prevent the decline in performance observed in the control group. This highlights the importance of instructional design in shaping learning outcomes. One of the most significant findings of this study was the strong interaction effect between time and group identified in the mixed ANOVA. This interaction indicates that the change in language proficiency over time differed significantly between the experimental and control groups. The interaction effect can be interpreted as evidence that the impact of time on language improvement was dependent on the type of instructional method used. The improvement across time indicates that continuous exposure to flipped instruction enhances language proficiency progressively (Abdullah and Ismail, 2019). In other words, while time alone did not lead to improvement in the control group, it resulted in substantial gains in the experimental group due to the flipped classroom intervention.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the FCM is a highly effective instructional approach for improving the English language proficiency of high school students. Even under conditions where the subject is not compulsory for the academic achievement of the students, FCM could achieve increased learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that the effectiveness of the FCM is not limited to high-performing students but extends to a wide range of learners. The consistent improvement across the experimental group indicates that the model is inclusive and adaptable to diverse learning needs.

In conclusion, the FCM represents a valuable alternative to traditional teaching methods, particularly in the context of English language education. It aligns with modern educational theories that emphasize active learning, learner autonomy, and the integration of technology. Therefore, it has strong potential to enhance the quality of education and improve student outcomes.

[4] A z-score measures how many standard deviations a particular value is above or below the mean of a distribution. Equation is $z = ((X-\mu))/\sigma$. Z-scores are given in the Sri Lankan Advanced Level examination to standardize marks, allowing fair comparison among students and ensuring equitable selection for university admission.

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