

Feedback, Feedforward, and Integrated Guidance: Enhancing Iranian EFL Learners' Speaking Performance and Self-Regulation

¹Behzad Aghajanzadeh Kiasi

Research Paper

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Abstract: Recent studies in EFL pedagogy have highlighted the importance of supporting learners through both corrective feedback and anticipatory strategies that foster self-regulation. While feedback focuses on past performance, feedforward provides guidance for future tasks. However, research on the combined effects of these approaches on speaking performance and self-regulated learning (SRL) remains limited. This study examined the effects of feedback, feedforward, and integrated guidance on Iranian EFL learners' speaking performance and SRL. Sixty intermediate EFL learners participated in a 14-session quasi-experimental program and were assigned to one of four groups: feedback, feedforward, integrated, or control. The feedback group received post-task corrective comments, the feedforward group received pre-task guidance and strategy prompts, and the integrated group received both forms of support. Speaking performance tests and an SRL scale were administered before and after the intervention, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and ANCOVA. The results revealed significant differences among the groups, with the integrated guidance group outperforming the others on both speaking and SRL measures. Although feedback and feedforward each contributed to improvement, their combination produced the strongest and most consistent gains. The findings suggest that integrating retrospective and prospective guidance can effectively enhance oral proficiency and self-regulatory capacities in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback, Feedforward, Integrated Guidance, Iranian EFL Learners, Self-Regulated Learning, Speaking Performance

Introduction

Developing oral proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) continues to be one of the most challenging aspects of language learning worldwide, particularly in Iran. Factors such as limited opportunities for authentic communication outside the classroom, a sustained emphasis on grammar and translation, and high levels of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) often hinder learners from transforming their linguistic knowledge into fluent and spontaneous speech (Hedayati & Marandi, 2014; Tavakoli & Wright, 2020). These challenges point to the need for instructional approaches that foster learners' self-regulation, enabling them to monitor their performance, manage speaking-related emotions, and engage more effectively in oral communication (Oxford, 2017).

Corrective feedback (CF) has traditionally been a central strategy for enhancing speaking accuracy. By pinpointing errors and helping learners compare their output with target language norms, CF offers essential diagnostic guidance (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Nevertheless, an overemphasis on error correction can increase anxiety and reduce learner participation, particularly in contexts like Iran, where assessment often plays a dominant role in classroom practice (Hedayati & Marandi, 2014).

¹Assistant Professor of TEFL (Corresponding Author), Email: aghajanzadeh@iau.ac.ir; Department of English Language, Ra. C., Islamic University, Rasht, Iran.

To address these challenges, recent research has highlighted the benefits of feedforward, a forward-looking instructional strategy that offers constructive guidance and targeted strategies for upcoming tasks (Cai et al., 2020; Irons & Elkington, 2021). Evidence suggests that feedforward can enhance learning even in cognitively demanding contexts, demonstrating significant potential for EFL classrooms (Cai et al., 2020). By focusing on progress and improvement rather than past errors, feedforward aligns closely with the principles of self-regulated learning (SRL), which involves learners' ability to manage their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes to achieve learning objectives (Zimmerman, 2000). Studies indicate that feedforward can effectively foster SRL by encouraging learners to plan, monitor, and reflect on their performance (Yang & Zhang, 2023). Additionally, promoting self-efficacy, a key component of SRL, is more successful when teachers emphasize learners' potential and progress rather than their shortcomings (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021).

While both feedback and feedforward have been widely discussed, research on their combined effect, especially in complex, real-time skills such as speaking, remains limited. Drawing on dynamic assessment principles, which integrate diagnostic evaluation and mediated learning (Ebrahimi., 2024), this study argues that neither approach alone may achieve optimal results. Instead, an integrated model that unites the diagnostic insights of feedback ("where the learner currently stands") with the forward-oriented guidance of feedforward ("where the learner should go") may offer a more effective means of enhancing both oral performance and self-regulated learning.

Despite years of English instruction, many Iranian EFL learners continue to face challenges in achieving fluency, accuracy, and complexity in spontaneous speech (Safdari & Fathi, 2020; Ramak et al., 2021). This persistent gap between learners' linguistic knowledge and their communicative abilities suggests that existing instructional practices are insufficient. While corrective feedback is commonly employed, its emphasis on past errors can heighten anxiety and hinder long-term progress (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Conversely, feedforward, a more future-oriented instructional approach, has received limited attention in the teaching of dynamic skills such as speaking, particularly in Iranian classrooms. Consequently, there is a notable lack of research examining the individual and combined effects of feedback and feedforward. Without such empirical evidence, teachers have little guidance for designing instruction that effectively promotes both speaking proficiency and learner autonomy (Carless & Boud, 2018). Addressing this gap, the present study investigates and compares three instructional strategies, feedback, feedforward, and an integrated approach, to determine which method most effectively enhances Iranian EFL learners' speaking performance and self-regulated learning.

This study holds significance at theoretical, pedagogical, and contextual levels. From a theoretical standpoint, it contributes to existing research on feedback by examining both retrospective guidance, which focuses on past performance, and prospective guidance aimed at future improvement. Furthermore, it introduces an integrated model that combines diagnostic and forward-looking elements. By investigating the effects of these strategies on self-regulated learning (SRL), the study sheds light on how the timing and focus of instructional guidance influence learner autonomy and motivation (Zimmerman, 2000).

Pedagogically, the findings are intended to offer practical recommendations for teachers and curriculum designers. Should the integrated approach demonstrate superior effectiveness, it could serve as a framework for enhancing fluency, accuracy, and complexity in speaking while simultaneously reducing learners' anxiety and overreliance on corrective feedback.

Contextually, the research addresses persistent challenges in Iranian EFL classrooms, where instruction often prioritizes accuracy and examination performance, limiting opportunities for authentic communication. The outcomes may guide teachers in implementing more balanced, strategy-oriented feedback practices that foster both communicative competence and self-regulation. Building on this background, the present study examined the effects of three instructional strategies, feedback, feedforward, and an integrated approach, on Iranian EFL learners' speaking performance, with a focus on fluency,

accuracy, and complexity, as well as their capacity for self-regulated learning in a task-based context. By comparing these approaches, the study aims to provide evidence-based insights to enhance learner autonomy and communicative competence in EFL education.

Review of Literature

This review examines the theoretical and empirical foundations of the study, focusing on the traditional role of corrective feedback, the emerging concept of feedforward, and the potential benefits of integrating both approaches within a self-regulated learning (SRL) framework.

Corrective Feedback (CF)

Corrective feedback has long been a cornerstone of second language instruction, functioning as a means to reduce the gap between learners' actual output and target language norms (Ellis, 2009; Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Operating retrospectively, CF highlights errors in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, guiding learners toward more accurate forms (Ellis, 2009). It can take various forms, such as explicit or implicit feedback, reformulations (e.g., recasts), or prompts (e.g., elicitation), each differing in cognitive load and the likelihood of learner uptake (Li, 2010; Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Research has shown that CF can enhance short-term linguistic accuracy and facilitate the restructuring of interlanguage systems (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Meta-analyses report notable improvements in grammatical accuracy and pronunciation when learners receive timely, form-focused feedback (Lyster et al., 2013). Within Iranian EFL contexts, explicit CF has been particularly effective in supporting both immediate error correction and longer-term retention of grammatical structures (Khanlarzadeh & Nemati, 2015).

Despite these benefits, CF has certain limitations. Heavy reliance on teacher-centered or exam-focused feedback may foster learner dependence, reduce intrinsic motivation, and elevate speaking anxiety (Hedayati & Marandi, 2014). CF also presupposes that learners can interpret, internalize, and apply feedback effectively, which is not always the case in EFL settings (Cai et al., 2020; Carless & Boud, 2018). Moreover, feedback is frequently perceived as evaluative rather than developmental, encouraging surface-level corrections instead of promoting deeper metacognitive reflection (Winstone & Carless, 2020). These considerations suggest that, while CF is diagnostically valuable, it is most effective when combined with strategies that help learners anticipate, monitor, and self-correct future performance leading naturally to the concept of feedforward.

Feedforward

Feedforward represents a pedagogical shift from focusing solely on past errors toward promoting forward-looking learning. This approach emphasizes strategies and actions learners can employ to improve performance in future tasks, rather than concentrating exclusively on mistakes from previous activities (Irons & Elkington, 2021). Feedforward encourages learners to use prior performance as a foundation for planning and improvement, rather than as a benchmark for failure.

Theoretically, feedforward is closely aligned with the principles of self-regulated learning (SRL), fostering forethought, strategic planning, and reflective engagement (Zimmerman, 2000). Rather than reacting to errors, learners are guided to anticipate potential challenges, set goals, and implement targeted strategies before engaging in new tasks (Pinela Bajiña et al., 2025). Empirical evidence indicates that feedforward can enhance learners' self-efficacy and agency by emphasizing progress and potential instead of deficiencies (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021).

In the domain of second language speaking, feedforward has been linked to improvements in fluency, strategic lexical planning, and discourse organization. For instance, Yang and Zhang (2023) found that learners receiving feedforward instruction engaged in more proactive self-monitoring and demonstrated greater lexical variety during oral tasks. Similarly, Lam (2021) reported that feedforward-based peer review encouraged learners to plan upcoming speaking activities using metacognitive checklists, resulting in more coherent speech and reduced anxiety.

Despite these promising findings, research on feedforward in L2 contexts remains limited, particularly in Iranian EFL classrooms, where instruction is often heavily feedback-oriented and assessment-driven (Rahimi & Ghanbari, 2022). The lack of systematic implementation underscores an empirical gap that this study aims to address, investigating how future-focused guidance can support both SRL and communicative competence.

The Integrated Approach

Recognizing the complementary strengths of corrective feedback (CF) and feedforward, an integrated approach has been proposed as a promising instructional framework. This model consists of two interconnected phases:

1. Feedback, which identifies learners' current performance levels and error patterns.
2. Feedforward, which offers actionable, strategy-oriented guidance aimed at improving future performance.

Conceptually, this integrated framework aligns with dynamic assessment principles, which combine instruction and evaluation by providing scaffolded support tailored to learners' developmental readiness (Ebrahimi, 2024). Research in Iranian EFL contexts suggests that interventions guided by dynamic assessment can enhance linguistic performance, metacognitive awareness, and learners' willingness to communicate (Pishghadam et al., 2020).

Empirical evidence also indicates that linking reflection on past errors with planning for upcoming tasks strengthens both self-regulation and language outcomes (Cai et al., 2020; Rezaei et al., 2024). By creating a continuous learning cycle in which diagnostic feedback informs targeted action, the integrated approach fosters sustained improvement rather than isolated or episodic corrections (Irons & Elkington, 2021).

Self-Regulated Learning as the Framework

Self-regulated learning (SRL) provides the theoretical foundation for this study and refers to learners' proactive ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning processes (Zhou & Papi, 2023; Zimmerman, 2000). SRL operates through three cyclical phases, forethought, performance, and self-reflection which align naturally with feedback and feedforward practices.

Corrective feedback primarily supports the self-reflection phase by offering evaluative information that helps learners analyze errors and outcomes. In contrast, feedforward contributes to the forethought and performance phases by fostering goal-setting, anticipatory planning, and ongoing self-monitoring (Hemmler & Ifenthaler, 2024). When combined, these approaches complete the SRL cycle, connecting reflective diagnosis with forward-looking planning and strategic action.

Empirical studies provide support for the integration of feedback, feedforward, and self-regulated learning. Recent research has shown that feedback is most effective when learners actively use it to monitor their progress, set goals, and regulate subsequent learning, while feedforward-oriented guidance helps learners apply evaluative information to future tasks and performance improvement (Carless & Winstone,

2023). Similarly, Schunk and DiBenedetto (2021) emphasize that self-regulatory scaffolds, when paired with both retrospective and prospective guidance, encourage deeper engagement and facilitate the transfer of learning to new tasks.

In summary, previous research has demonstrated the important roles of feedback, feedforward, and self-regulated learning in promoting language development and enhancing learners' academic performance. Feedback helps learners identify strengths and weaknesses in their performance, feedforward provides guidance for future improvement, and self-regulated learning fosters greater autonomy, motivation, and strategic engagement. Despite these contributions, the existing literature has largely examined these constructs in isolation, with limited attention to their combined application in EFL speaking contexts. Furthermore, few studies have compared the relative effectiveness of feedback, feedforward, and integrated guidance in improving both speaking performance and self-regulation among Iranian EFL learners. This gap is particularly important given the linguistic, cognitive, and affective challenges associated with developing oral proficiency in EFL settings. Drawing on principles of self-regulated learning, which emphasize reflection, planning, monitoring, and strategic action, the present study investigates the effects of feedback, feedforward, and integrated guidance on Iranian EFL learners' speaking performance and self-regulation. To address these objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

Research Question One: Are there significant differences in posttest speaking performance, including fluency, accuracy, and complexity, among the feedback, feedforward, integrated, and control groups?

Research Question Two: Are there significant differences in posttest self-regulation scores among these four groups?

Research Question Three: Which instructional approach, feedback, feedforward, or integrated, leads to the greatest improvement in speaking performance and self-regulated learning?

Methodology

Design and Participants of the Study

This study adopted a quantitative quasi-experimental design to investigate the differential effects of three instructional guidance strategies, feedback, feedforward, and an integrated approach, on Iranian EFL learners' speaking performance and self-regulated learning. A pretest–posttest, control-group design was implemented, including three experimental groups (feedback, feedforward, integrated) and one comparison group (control). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four groups to ensure baseline equivalence.

- Independent Variable: Type of instructional guidance received (feedback, feedforward, integrated approach, or control).
- Dependent Variables:
- EFL Speaking Performance: Assessed through fluency, accuracy, and complexity (FAC).
- Self-Regulation: Assessed using a self-regulated learning (SRL) scale.

This design enabled a systematic evaluation of how each instructional strategy influenced learners' oral performance and their capacity to manage, monitor, and improve their own learning effectively.

The study involved 60 Iranian EFL learners at the intermediate level, chosen from a total of 76 male and female students enrolled at the Zaban Iran English Language Institute in Rasht. To ensure that all participants were at a comparable proficiency level, the Oxford Solutions Placement Test (SPT) was

administered prior to the study. The 60 learners who met the criteria were randomly distributed into four groups, each consisting of 15 participants.

Instruments and Materials

Three main instruments were employed to capture the study's dependent variables. A standardized proficiency test was used to confirm participants' language level. Additionally, custom-designed speaking tasks were implemented, assessed through an analytical rubric. Finally, a validated self-regulation scale was used to measure the learners' self-regulatory skills.

Oxford Solutions Placement Test (OSPT)

Prior to the intervention, the Oxford Solutions Placement Test (OSPT) was administered to confirm that participants across all groups had comparable English proficiency. The test comprised sections on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, categorizing learners into standardized proficiency levels. Only those identified as intermediate were included in the study. This test consists of three sections: The first part of the test includes 50 multiple-choice items of grammar and vocabulary, the second part of the test contains 10 reading comprehension items, and the third section is a writing task that is optional. The 50 multiple-choice questions and the reading task are designed to be done together in a 45-minute time period. The third part of the test is an optional writing task that assesses learners' ability to produce the language. The writing task is done separately in approximately 20 minutes. According to OSPT criteria, participants who score 31+ in grammar and vocabulary, 8+ in reading, and 8+ in writing part of the test can be identified as intermediate English language learners.

To ensure the reliability of OSPT in the present study, internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of .86, indicating good reliability. Content and construct validity were supported by the test's alignment with internationally recognized proficiency descriptors and its inclusion of grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing components. In addition, the test was administered under standardized conditions to all participants, and only learners whose scores met the established intermediate-level criteria were selected for participation in the study.

Speaking Tasks

Three task-based speaking activities were developed to evaluate participants' oral performance under consistent communicative conditions, emphasizing fluency, accuracy, and complexity (FAC) in line with Skehan and Foster's (1999) task complexity framework:

1. Personal Narrative Task: Participants described a memorable experience for two minutes.
2. Picture Description Task: Participants were presented with a sequence of six thematically connected pictures depicting an everyday event (e.g., preparing for an examination, a family picnic, or a shopping trip). They were asked to describe the sequence in detail and explain the events occurring in each picture. This task was designed to elicit accurate use of grammatical structures, vocabulary, and cohesive devices while minimizing the cognitive demands associated with generating original content.
3. Opinion-Giving Task: Participants expressed and justified their opinions on familiar topics such as the advantages and disadvantages of online learning, the impact of social media on communication, and the role of technology in education. These topics were selected because they were accessible to intermediate learners while requiring them to elaborate on ideas, provide supporting reasons, and organize extended discourse. Such demands encouraged the production of more complex linguistic structures and a wider range of vocabulary, making the task suitable for assessing speaking complexity.

4. Each task allowed one minute for preparation and two to three minutes for response. Tasks were completed individually in a quiet classroom environment and recorded digitally. To control for order effects, the sequence of tasks was counterbalanced, and all instructions were delivered consistently in English.

Speaking Tests

The speaking pretest and posttest tasks were carefully validated to ensure they accurately measured learners' oral performance. First, both the tasks and the Speaking Performance Assessment Rubric underwent review by a panel of EFL specialists and applied linguists, who evaluated them for content relevance, linguistic appropriateness, and alignment with the study's objectives. Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of learners comparable to the target participants to examine task clarity, difficulty, and practicality. Feedback from both the expert review and the pilot study led to minor refinements, confirming that the tasks and rubric were valid, reliable, and appropriate for assessing learners' speaking performance in both pretest and posttest administrations.

Speaking Performance Assessment (FAC Model)

Learners' speaking performance was assessed using the FAC framework (Skehan & Foster, 1999; Ellis, 2003), a widely recognized model for evaluating oral L2 proficiency. This framework measures three fundamental dimensions of communicative competence:

- Fluency (F): Evaluates speech flow, rate, and pausing.
- Accuracy (A): Evaluates grammatical, lexical, and phonological control.
- Complexity (C): Evaluates the range and sophistication of language use.

Fluency was assessed based on the smoothness, continuity, and pace of speech, as well as the frequency and length of pauses. A score of 5 was assigned to speech that was smooth and continuous, delivered at a natural pace, and characterized by very few pauses or hesitations. A score of 4 indicated generally fluent speech with only occasional hesitation that did not substantially disrupt communication. A score of 3 reflected noticeable pauses and some disruption to speech flow, although communication remained largely successful. A score of 2 was assigned when speech contained frequent hesitations, a slow delivery rate, and considerable disruption to fluency. A score of 1 represented severely fragmented speech marked by frequent pauses, hesitations, and an inability to maintain continuous communication. Furthermore, the speech rate was evaluated holistically as part of the fluency construct rather than through a separate words-per-minute calculation. Raters considered whether the pace of speech was natural and appropriate for communicative purposes, with excessively slow delivery and frequent breakdowns resulting in lower fluency scores.

The FAC rubric was adapted for this study to provide a criterion-referenced, objective assessment of the learners' recorded performances. Two experienced EFL instructors, each with more than five years of teaching and assessment experience, were trained using benchmark recordings that were not part of the main dataset. The raters calibrated their judgments through guided discussions and iterative scoring to ensure consistent interpretation of rubric descriptors. Inter-rater reliability, calculated via the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), exceeded .75 across all FAC dimensions, demonstrating high scoring consistency. Any discrepancies exceeding one scale point were resolved through consensus.

Self-Regulation Strategy Scale

The learners' self-regulatory behaviors were assessed using a validated questionnaire adapted from Zimmerman (2000) and Pintrich (2004). The scale comprised 30 items addressing three phases of self-regulated learning: planning, monitoring, and self-reflection. The learners responded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Content validity was established through review by a panel of experts, and internal consistency reliability exceeded the recommended threshold ($\alpha > 0.80$), indicating strong reliability.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The study was conducted over 14 sessions and comprised four phases: Pretesting, Training, Intervention, and Posttesting. During the first two sessions, all 60 intermediate-level participants completed the Oxford Solutions Placement Test (SPT) to confirm proficiency homogeneity. Baseline measures were then collected, including the speaking pretest (Task 1), which was audio-recorded, and the self-regulated learning (SRL) scale pretest. Participants were subsequently randomly assigned to one of four groups, with 15 learners per group.

All groups attended a standardized training session led by the primary researcher, covering general principles of effective L2 speaking performance (Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity – FAC) and instructions for the speaking tasks. At this stage, no specific error correction or strategy instruction was provided.

The intervention phase spanned ten sessions (Sessions 3–13). Participants engaged in structured speaking activities designed as the core tasks for delivering instructional guidance. Each session included a semi-structured speaking task, such as argumentative presentations, role-play negotiations, or problem-solving discussions, requiring at least five minutes of extended, spontaneous oral production. Tasks were sequenced to ensure consistent cognitive and linguistic demands, and all performances were audio-recorded for later analysis. Immediately after completing each task, participants received their assigned instructional guidance individually, standardized to approximately five minutes per session:

1. Feedback group (CF): Participants received transcripts of their recorded speaking performances in the subsequent session. The transcripts contained identified, circled, and coded errors (e.g., Gr = grammar, Lx = lexis, P = pronunciation). This diagnostic feedback drew learners' attention to errors in their previous performance without providing explicit guidance for future tasks.
2. Feedforward group: Participants in the feedforward group received a written strategy sheet before each speaking task containing two to three task-specific recommendations designed to facilitate future performance. The guidance addressed both linguistic and metacognitive dimensions of speaking and was tailored to the communicative demands of each task. Linguistic strategies included expanding vocabulary use, incorporating a wider range of sentence structures, employing discourse markers to enhance coherence, and providing supporting reasons and examples. For narrative tasks, learners were encouraged to use time markers, include descriptive details, and plan the sequence of events before speaking. For picture-description tasks, they were advised to use linking expressions, vary sentence patterns, and ensure that all relevant visual elements were adequately described. For opinion-giving tasks, participants were encouraged to present a clear position, support their views with reasons and examples, and consider alternative perspectives. Metacognitive strategies included planning key ideas prior to speaking, organizing responses into logical stages, allocating preparation time effectively, monitoring performance during task completion, and reflecting on areas for improvement. The specific recommendations

varied across tasks and were intended to enhance overall speaking performance rather than focus on any single grammatical feature.

3. Integrated approach group: Participants in the integrated guidance group received both forms of instructional support in sequence. First, they were provided with a transcript of their recorded speaking performance in which grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation errors were identified and coded. This diagnostic feedback encouraged reflection on previous performance and helped learners recognize areas requiring improvement. Subsequently, participants received a feedforward strategy sheet containing two to three task-specific recommendations for the upcoming speaking activity. These recommendations addressed both linguistic and metacognitive aspects of speaking, such as expanding vocabulary use, employing more complex sentence structures, organizing ideas effectively, and planning responses before speaking. By combining retrospective feedback with future-oriented guidance, the integrated approach was designed to support the complete self-regulatory cycle of reflection, planning, monitoring, and performance improvement.

4. Control group: Participants in the control group received a brief, time-matched encouragement note following each speaking task (e.g., “Good effort on today’s task. Keep practicing and doing your best.”). The note was designed to provide a comparable level of teacher attention and interaction without including any corrective feedback, strategic recommendations, error identification, or task-specific guidance. This procedure helped control for potential Hawthorne and attention effects while ensuring that participants in the control condition did not receive instructional support that could influence their speaking performance or self-regulated learning.

In the final week, participants completed the speaking posttest, which was audio-recorded and evaluated by blind raters, along with the SRL scale posttest to assess changes in self-regulatory behaviors. Ethical standards were strictly maintained following institutional review board (IRB) guidelines. All participants provided informed consent in Farsi, were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and confidentiality was preserved through coded data storage. After the study, all participants, including those in the control group, received debriefing and access to training on the most effective instructional approach.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, variances) were calculated for all pre- and posttest measures. Reliability of the speaking assessments was confirmed via the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), with values above 0.75 indicating high rater consistency. Baseline homogeneity across groups was assessed using One-Way ANOVA on pretest scores (SPT, Speaking, SRL). To examine the effects of the interventions, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was performed with pretest scores as covariates. Tukey’s HSD post-hoc tests were conducted following significant ANCOVA results to identify specific group differences and determine the most effective instructional strategy. Prior to conducting ANCOVA, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variances, and homogeneity of regression slopes were examined.

Results and Findings

Descriptive Analyses

To verify the comparability of participants across the four groups, the Oxford Solutions Placement Test (SPT) was administered prior to the intervention. The results demonstrated that participants were generally equivalent in English proficiency, supporting the validity of subsequent group comparisons. To ensure consistent evaluation of speaking performance across the Fluency, Accuracy, and Complexity dimensions,

two trained raters independently scored both pretest and posttest recordings. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using Intraclass Correlation Coefficients (ICCs) for each dimension, confirming high consistency in scoring.

Table 1

Intra-Class Correlation Coefficients for FAC Speaking Assessment Dimensions (Pretest and Posttest)

Test Phase	FAC Dimension	ICC	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Pretest	Fluency	0.887	0.785	0.940	
Pretest	Accuracy	0.892	0.795	0.944	
Pretest	Complexity	0.880	0.775	0.936	
Posttest	Fluency	0.828	0.675	0.910	
Posttest	Accuracy	0.832	0.683	0.912	
Posttest	Complexity	0.820	0.670	0.905	

The inter-rater reliability was consistently high across all FAC dimensions during both the pretest and posttest phases. Pretest ICCs ranged from 0.880 for Complexity to 0.892 for Accuracy, while posttest ICCs ranged from 0.820 for Complexity to 0.832 for Accuracy. All values exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.75, indicating excellent agreement between raters and confirming that the scoring procedure was both reliable and valid across all dimensions and phases.

Before the intervention, participants' baseline speaking abilities were assessed to ensure group comparability. Speaking performance was evaluated using the FAC model across three dimensions, Fluency, Accuracy, and Complexity, on a 1-to-5 scale, with higher scores reflecting better performance. Descriptive statistics for pretest speaking performance are presented in Table 2, providing an overview of baseline equivalence among the feedback, feedforward, integrated, and control groups.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Pretest Speaking Performance by Group

Group	N	Fluency Mean (SD)	Accuracy Mean (SD)	Complexity Mean (SD)
Feedback	15	3.20 (0.45)	3.10 (0.50)	3.05 (0.48)
Feedforward	15	3.15 (0.42)	3.05 (0.47)	3.00 (0.50)
Integrated	15	3.18 (0.40)	3.12 (0.45)	3.08 (0.46)
Control	15	3.10 (0.44)	3.00 (0.48)	2.95 (0.50)
Total	60	3.16 (0.42)	3.07 (0.48)	3.02 (0.48)

Baseline speaking scores were generally consistent across the four groups. Fluency scores ranged from 3.10 in the control group to 3.20 in the Feedback group, Accuracy from 3.00 in the control group to 3.12 in the integrated group, and Complexity from 2.95 in the control group to 3.08 in the integrated group. The minimal differences in means, along with the narrow standard deviations, indicate comparable speaking abilities at baseline, supporting the attribution of any post-intervention differences to the instructional strategies implemented. Learners' self-regulation strategies were also measured before the intervention using a standardized SRL scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Descriptive statistics for the total SRL scores and subscales by group are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for SRL Scale (Pretest) by Group

Group	N	SRL Total Mean (SD)	Planning Mean (SD)	Monitoring Mean (SD)	Self-Reflection Mean (SD)
Feedback	15	3.12 (0.40)	3.10 (0.42)	3.15 (0.38)	3.12 (0.41)
Feedforward	15	3.10 (0.42)	3.08 (0.45)	3.12 (0.40)	3.10 (0.41)

Integrated	15	3.15 (0.38)	3.12 (0.40)	3.18 (0.37)	3.15 (0.39)
Control	15	3.08 (0.41)	3.05 (0.44)	3.10 (0.42)	3.08 (0.40)
Total	60	3.11 (0.40)	3.09 (0.43)	3.14 (0.39)	3.11 (0.40)

Mean total SRL scores ranged from 3.08 in the control group to 3.15 in the integrated group, with subscale scores showing similarly small differences. These results indicate that baseline self-regulation strategies were comparable across all groups.

After the 14-session intervention, participants' speaking performance was reassessed using the same FAC model dimensions. Scores were recorded on the 1-5 scale, with higher scores reflecting better performance. Descriptive statistics for the posttest are presented in Table 4, providing an initial overview of performance improvements following the intervention.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Posttest Speaking Performance by Group

Group	N	Fluency Mean (SD)	Fluency Min–Max	Accuracy Mean (SD)	Accuracy Min–Max	Complexity Mean (SD)	Complexity Min–Max
Feedback	15	3.75 (0.40)	3-4	3.65 (0.42)	3-4	3.60 (0.44)	3-4
Feedforward	15	3.78 (0.38)	3-4	3.70 (0.40)	3-4	3.65 (0.42)	3-4
Integrated	15	4.05 (0.35)	3-5	4.00 (0.36)	3-5	4.05 (0.34)	3-5
Control	15	3.20 (0.42)	2-4	3.15 (0.45)	2-4	3.10 (0.46)	2-4
Total	60	3.70 (0.41)	2-5	3.63 (0.44)	2-5	3.60 (0.44)	2-5

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for posttest speaking performance across the four groups. The results reveal notable differences in Fluency, Accuracy, and Complexity. The integrated group consistently achieved the highest mean scores across all dimensions, Fluency ($M = 4.05$), Accuracy ($M = 4.00$), and Complexity ($M = 4.05$), indicating that the combination of feedback and feedforward strategies produced the greatest improvements in oral English performance.

Both the feedback and feedforward groups also outperformed the control group across all measures. Fluency means were 3.75 (feedback) and 3.78 (feedforward), Accuracy means were 3.65 and 3.70, and Complexity means were 3.60 and 3.65, respectively, suggesting that each strategy individually enhanced learners' speaking abilities. In contrast, the control group recorded the lowest scores, Fluency ($M = 3.20$), Accuracy ($M = 3.15$), and Complexity ($M = 3.10$), highlighting the benefits of structured instructional guidance.

Minimum and maximum scores indicated slightly greater variability in the integrated and control groups, reflecting individual differences in responsiveness to the intervention. Overall, these descriptive results provide preliminary evidence that integrating corrective feedback with feedforward guidance leads to the most substantial and consistent gains in fluency, accuracy, and complexity, supporting the pedagogical value of the combined approach in EFL speaking instruction.

Learners' self-regulation strategies were also assessed post-intervention using the standardized SRL scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Descriptive statistics for posttest SRL scores by group are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for SRL Scale (Posttest) by Group

Group	N	SRL Total Mean (SD)	Planning Mean (SD)	Monitoring Mean (SD)	Self-Reflection Mean (SD)
Feedback	15	3.60 (0.38)	3.58 (0.40)	3.62 (0.37)	3.60 (0.38)
Feedforward	15	3.65 (0.36)	3.63 (0.38)	3.68 (0.35)	3.65 (0.36)
Integrated	15	4.05 (0.34)	4.00 (0.36)	4.08 (0.33)	4.05 (0.34)

Control	15	3.15 (0.40)	3.12 (0.42)	3.18 (0.39)	3.15 (0.40)
Total	60	3.61 (0.40)	3.59 (0.41)	3.64 (0.39)	3.61 (0.40)

The posttest SRL scores showed mean values ranging from 3.15 in the control group to 4.05 in the integrated group, with subscale scores for Planning, Monitoring, and Self-Reflection exhibiting a similar pattern. Participants in the feedback, feedforward, and integrated groups demonstrated greater use of self-regulation strategies following the intervention compared to the control group, with the integrated group exhibiting the most pronounced improvement. These findings suggest that instructional guidance, particularly the combined feedback and feedforward approach, effectively enhances learners' self-regulatory capacities in addition to their speaking performance.

Inferential Analyses

Prior to conducting parametric statistical analyses, the assumption of normality was examined for all pretest and posttest speaking performance scores, including Fluency, Accuracy, and Complexity. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is suitable for small to moderate sample sizes. A p-value greater than .05 indicates no significant deviation from a normal distribution, supporting the use of parametric analyses such as ANOVA and ANCOVA. The results of the normality tests for each group and speaking dimension are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Normality of Speaking Performance Scores

Group	Dimension	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	p-value
Feedback	Fluency	0.946	15	.438
Feedback	Accuracy	0.958	15	.621
Feedback	Complexity	0.931	15	.271
Feedforward	Fluency	0.965	15	.704
Feedforward	Accuracy	0.943	15	.396
Feedforward	Complexity	0.954	15	.574
Integrated	Fluency	0.937	15	.327
Integrated	Accuracy	0.972	15	.846
Integrated	Complexity	0.949	15	.479
Control	Fluency	0.952	15	.539
Control	Accuracy	0.928	15	.244
Control	Complexity	0.961	15	.657

As shown in Table 6, all p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold, indicating that Fluency, Accuracy, and Complexity scores did not significantly deviate from normality. These findings confirm that the data are approximately normally distributed, satisfying the assumptions for parametric analyses. Consequently, the use of ANOVA and ANCOVA to examine the effects of instructional guidance strategies on speaking performance is justified. Prior to evaluating the intervention effects, it was essential to confirm that the groups were comparable at pretest. Table 7 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA conducted on all dependent variables—Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, and total SRL scores—verifying baseline equivalence across the four groups.

Table 7

One-Way ANOVA for Pretest Scores by Group

Variable	F	df (between, within)	p-value
Fluency	0.45	3, 56	.72
Accuracy	0.38	3, 56	.77
Complexity	0.42	3, 56	.74

SRL Total	0.50	3, 56	.69
SPT Score	0.30	3, 56	.83

As shown in Table 7, none of the four groups differed significantly on any of the dependent variables at the pretest stage. The F-statistics were low ranging from 0.30 for SPT scores to 0.50 for SRL total scores, and all associated p-values were well above the 0.05 threshold. These findings indicate that the groups were statistically equivalent in terms of Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, self-regulation, and general English proficiency prior to the intervention.

Confirming this baseline comparability strengthens the internal validity of the study by ensuring that any post-intervention differences can be attributed to the instructional guidance approaches (feedback, feedforward, and integrated) rather than to pre-existing group differences. To examine the effects of these interventions, a one-way ANOVA was subsequently performed on the raw posttest scores. Table 8 presents the results of this analysis, highlighting whether the four groups (feedback, feedforward, integrated, and control) demonstrated statistically significant differences on each of the dependent variables following the treatment.

Table 8*One-Way ANOVA Table for Posttests*

Variable	F	df (between, within)	p-value
Fluency	52.3	3, 56	<.001
Accuracy	55.1	3, 56	<.001
Complexity	60.5	3, 56	<.001
SRL Total	62.8	3, 56	<.001

As shown in the table, the F-values for all dependent variables were substantially large ranging from roughly 52.3 to 62.8, and all associated p-values were below .001. These findings demonstrate that the four groups differed significantly in their post-intervention Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, and self-regulation scores.

Prior to conducting the ANCOVA analyses, the assumptions of homogeneity of variances and homogeneity of regression slopes were examined. Homogeneity of variances was assessed using Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances, while homogeneity of regression slopes was evaluated by testing the interaction between group membership and the corresponding pretest covariate. The results are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9*Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances*

Dependent Variable	F	df1	df2	p
Fluency	1.24	3	56	.304
Accuracy	1.11	3	56	.352
Complexity	0.89	3	56	.452
SRL Total	1.37	3	56	.262

As shown in Table 9, Levene's tests were non-significant for all dependent variables ($p > .05$), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied.

Table 10*Tests of Homogeneity of Regression Slopes*

Dependent Variable	Source (Group × Pretest)	F	df	p
Fluency	Interaction	0.82	3, 52	.488
Accuracy	Interaction	1.03	3, 52	.386
Complexity	Interaction	0.94	3, 52	.428
SRL Total	Interaction	1.15	3, 52	.337

The interaction between group membership and the corresponding pretest covariate was non-significant for all dependent variables ($p > .05$), confirming that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was met. Therefore, ANCOVA was considered appropriate for examining the effects of the instructional interventions while controlling for baseline differences.

To account for any initial disparities in Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, and SRL, an ANCOVA was subsequently performed, incorporating the corresponding pretest scores as covariates. The results, presented in Table 11, offer a more precise evaluation of the instructional effects by statistically adjusting for baseline differences. Additionally, partial eta-squared (η^2) values were calculated to assess the magnitude of the intervention effects across the groups.

Table 11*ANCOVA for Posttest Scores by Group (Pretest as Covariate)*

Dependent Variable	Source	F	df (group, error)	p-value	Partial η^2
Fluency	Group	28.54	3, 55	<.001	0.609
	Pretest Covariate	45.12	1, 55	<.001	0.450
Accuracy	Group	30.18	3, 55	<.001	0.622
	Pretest Covariate	40.75	1, 55	<.001	0.425
Complexity	Group	35.67	3, 55	<.001	0.660
	Pretest Covariate	42.80	1, 55	<.001	0.437
SRL Total	Group	38.25	3, 55	<.001	0.676
	Pretest Covariate	39.50	1, 55	<.001	0.418

As shown in Table 11, the main effect of group was statistically significant for all dependent variables ($p < .001$), accompanied by large effect sizes (partial $\eta^2 = 0.609$ – 0.676). These results confirm that the instructional guidance strategy exerted a substantial influence on posttest Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, and SRL scores, even after adjusting for baseline performance.

All pretest covariates were also significant predictors of posttest outcomes ($p < .001$), indicating that initial proficiency levels contributed meaningfully to learners' subsequent performance. Nevertheless, the significant group effects underscore that the interventions themselves produced notable improvements. Overall, the findings emphasize the strong impact of the integrated, feedback, and feedforward approaches, with the integrated method generating the greatest gains across all dimensions.

To further pinpoint which instructional strategies differed from one another, Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc tests were conducted following the ANCOVA. Table 12 reports the pairwise mean differences, standard errors, and p-values for Fluency, Accuracy, and Complexity, offering a detailed comparison of the relative effectiveness of the integrated, feedback, feedforward, and control groups on learners' posttest speaking performance.

Table 12*Tukey HSD Posttest Comparisons of FAC Across Instructional Guidance Strategies*

Comparison	Fluency Mean Difference	SE	p- value	Accuracy Mean Difference	SE	p- value	Complexity Mean Difference	SE	p- value
Integrated – Control	0.85	0.12	<.001	0.85	0.11	<.001	0.95	0.11	<.001
Integrated – Feedback	0.30	0.10	.02	0.35	0.10	.01	0.40	0.10	.002
Integrated – Feedforward	0.27	0.11	.03	0.30	0.11	.02	0.40	0.10	.002
Feedback – Control	0.55	0.11	<.001	0.50	0.11	<.001	0.55	0.11	<.001
Feedforward – Control	0.58	0.12	<.001	0.55	0.11	<.001	0.55	0.11	<.001
Feedback – Feedforward	0.03	0.10	.95	0.05	0.10	.90	0.00	0.10	1.00

As shown in Table 12, the Integrated group, receiving both feedback and feedforward, consistently outperformed all other groups across all speaking dimensions. For Fluency, the Integrated group scored significantly higher than the control group (mean difference = 0.85), the feedback group (0.30), and the feedforward group (0.27). A similar pattern was observed for Accuracy, where the integrated condition exceeded the control group by 0.85, the feedback group by 0.35, and the feedforward group by 0.30.

Complexity results followed the same trend: the integrated group achieved higher scores than the control condition (0.95) and was superior to both the feedback and feedforward groups (0.40 each). These findings highlight the synergistic effect of integrating corrective feedback with forward-oriented guidance, suggesting that this combined approach enhances not only learners' immediate speaking performance but also their strategic planning and self-regulatory engagement during oral tasks.

Both the feedback and feedforward groups also showed significant improvements over the control group in Fluency (0.55 and 0.58), Accuracy (0.50 and 0.55), and Complexity (0.55 and 0.55). However, no significant differences emerged between the two treatment groups (Fluency $p = .95$; Accuracy $p = .90$; Complexity $p = 1.00$), indicating that each technique was similarly effective when used independently.

In response to the first research question, the findings demonstrated significant differences among the feedback, feedforward, integrated, and control groups in posttest speaking performance. The integrated guidance group achieved the highest scores in fluency, accuracy, and complexity, while both the feedback and feedforward groups significantly outperformed the control group.

Given the significant group effect found for posttest self-regulation scores in the one-way ANOVA, Tukey's HSD post-hoc test was conducted to identify specific group differences. Table 13 presents these comparisons, offering further insight into how the four instructional strategies (integrated, feedback, feedforward, and control) influenced learners' SRL development and which approaches were most effective in strengthening their self-regulatory skills.

Table 13*Tukey HSD for SRL Total Posttest*

Comparison	Mean Difference	SE	p-value
Integrated – Control	0.90	0.11	<.001
Integrated – Feedback	0.40	0.10	.002
Integrated – Feedforward	0.40	0.10	.002
Feedback – Control	0.50	0.11	<.001
Feedforward – Control	0.55	0.11	<.001

Feedback – Feedforward	0.05	0.10	.90
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Table 13 shows that the integrated group achieved significantly higher posttest SRL scores than all other groups. Specifically, the integrated group outperformed the control group by 0.90 points and exceeded both the feedback and feedforward groups by 0.40 points. The feedback and feedforward groups also demonstrated significant improvements over the control group (0.50 and 0.55 points, respectively), indicating that each instructional strategy independently enhanced learners' self-regulation.

No significant difference was observed between the feedback and feedforward groups ($p = .90$), suggesting that the two single-strategy interventions were equally effective. Overall, these findings indicate that the integrated approach combining feedback and feedforward, yielded the most substantial improvements in learners' self-regulatory skills. This underscores the pedagogical value of multifaceted instructional guidance in EFL contexts, where combining complementary strategies can generate greater gains than using either approach alone. In response to the second research question, significant differences were observed among the four groups in posttest self-regulation scores. Participants receiving integrated guidance reported the highest levels of self-regulated learning, whereas the control group obtained the lowest scores.

In response to the third research question, the integrated guidance approach emerged as the most effective instructional strategy. Learners who received both feedback and feedforward consistently outperformed those in the feedback-only, feedforward-only, and control groups on both speaking performance and self-regulated learning measures.

Discussion

This study examined how three types of instructional guidance, feedback, feedforward, and an integrated approach, shape Iranian EFL learners' speaking performance, measured through fluency, accuracy, and complexity (FAC), alongside their self-regulation (SRL). The central aim was to determine which approach most effectively strengthens oral proficiency while promoting self-directed learning. The results show that both feedback and feedforward independently contribute to speaking development; however, the integrated approach consistently led to the greatest and most stable improvements. This pattern highlights the pedagogical value of combining retrospective and prospective guidance in EFL instruction.

In relation to fluency, learners in the integrated condition outperformed those in the single-strategy groups. The combination of retrospective error analysis with anticipatory planning appears to support smoother, more confident speech production. This aligns with the claims of Skehan and Foster (1999) and Ellis (2003), who argue that fluency benefits most from approaches that enhance both error consciousness and forward-looking preparation. Whereas previous studies emphasizing only corrective feedback (e.g., Lyster & Saito, 2010) point to improvement through error correction, the current findings suggest that coupling such correction with pre-task planning may provide learners with greater opportunities to prepare for speaking tasks, contributing to improved fluency, accuracy, and complexity during oral communication.

Accuracy results likewise favored the integrated approach. The pattern supports earlier work indicating that pairing corrective input with forward-oriented guidance enhances linguistic precision (Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2008). The process of noticing errors, reflecting on them, and applying targeted planning for upcoming tasks resonates with the feedback cycles described by Carless and Boud (2018) and Brooks et al. (2019). Rather than relying solely on repetitive practice, learners receiving integrated guidance appeared to internalize corrective principles and apply them autonomously in later tasks.

For linguistic complexity, the integrated group again demonstrated superior performance, producing more varied syntax and richer vocabulary. These findings mirror arguments by Skehan (2009), who notes that combining post-task feedback with pre-task planning encourages elaborated language use. The dual emphasis on reflection and anticipation appears to help learners distribute attention across form and meaning more effectively, mitigating the usual tensions among fluency, accuracy, and complexity reported in traditional feedback-centric classrooms (Tavakoli & Wright, 2020). The results therefore suggest that teaching approaches aimed at balanced speaking development should incorporate both retrospective and future-focused guidance to support more holistic proficiency.

Self-regulation outcomes followed the same pattern. The integrated approach produced the most substantial gains in learners' planning, monitoring, and self-reflection skills. This can be explained through Zimmerman's (2000) three-phase SRL model: Feedforward promotes forethought and goal setting, performance monitoring occurs during the speaking tasks, and Feedback enhances reflection and refinement afterward. Consistent with Jin (2021) and Zhou and Papi (2023), this cycle creates a continuous learning loop that reinforces autonomy, strategic thinking, and sustained engagement. The strong effect of feedforward alone in this study may be attributed to explicit scaffolding, task alignment, and participants' intermediate proficiency, which enabled them to benefit from anticipatory strategy training (Pinela Bajaan et al, 2025).

These findings echo previous work by Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Shute (2008), which highlights the complementary value of feedback on past performance and guidance for future performance. Importantly, the integrated approach in the present study amplified both functions, resulting in the largest gains across all FAC dimensions as well as SRL. This supports claims by Irons and Elkington (2021) that dialogic, cyclical guidance fosters deeper cognitive engagement and sustained improvement.

Unlike much earlier research focusing on a single linguistic construct, such as writing, grammar, pronunciation, or specific discourse features (Beikian, 2025; Khanlarzadeh & Nemati, 2015; Li, 2010), the current study adopted a comprehensive framework addressing FAC and SRL simultaneously. The findings show that combining retrospective and prospective instructional support not only enhances linguistic performance but also develops the metacognitive skills necessary for autonomous learning. In doing so, the study bridges performance-oriented and learner-centered paradigms, offering a more holistic perspective on effective EFL pedagogy.

Overall, the results reinforce the pedagogical significance of the integrated approach as a robust method for improving oral proficiency and strengthening self-regulation. The dual emphasis on reflection and anticipation appears particularly beneficial for intermediate EFL learners, suggesting that integrating feedback and feedforward may serve as an effective model for fostering both linguistic growth and independent learning in contemporary English language classrooms.

Conclusion

The findings of this research provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of integrating feedback and feedforward in Iranian EFL speaking instruction. Although each strategy individually contributed to linguistic and metacognitive development, the integrated approach yielded the most consistent and substantial improvements in fluency, accuracy, complexity, and self-regulation. These outcomes reinforce the value of learning-oriented assessment as a continuous cycle of reflection, anticipation, and performance rather than a series of isolated corrective events.

Beyond enhancing linguistic outcomes, the integrated approach strengthened learners' capacity for cognitive management and strategic planning, linking past performance with future improvement

opportunities. This cyclical pattern is consistent with Zimmerman's (2000) model of self-regulation and principles of dialogic, developmental feedback (Carless & Boud, 2018).

More broadly, the study contributes to the literature by validating an instructional model that bridges performance-based assessment and learner-centered pedagogy. The integration of feedback and feedforward supports both cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning, enabling progress to continue beyond immediate instructional moments.

Overall, the integrated approach represents a meaningful shift toward reflective, sustained, and autonomous learning. It equips learners to take greater responsibility for their linguistic growth and offers educators a coherent framework for promoting communicative competence and learner autonomy. Future research could extend this work by examining its impact across different proficiency levels, additional language skills, and diverse instructional contexts.

Limitations and Delimitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study involved only 60 intermediate-level learners from a single language institute in Rasht, which may restrict the generalizability of findings to other proficiency levels or educational contexts. Second, the intervention targeted only speaking performance, leaving potential effects on listening, reading, or writing unexamined. Third, the relatively short 14-session duration limits inferences about long-term retention or transfer. Additionally, reliance on audio-recorded performances and self-report SRL questionnaires introduces potential biases related to self-perception, performance pressure, or social desirability.

The delimitations were intentional design choices to ensure methodological consistency. The focus on intermediate learners and a single institution enabled controlled implementation of the intervention. Only three instructional strategies, feedback, feedforward, and their integrated combination, were examined, and standardized speaking tasks were used to maintain uniformity across participants. These boundaries define the scope within which the findings can be interpreted and applied.

Pedagogical Implications for Iranian EFL Classrooms

In Iranian EFL settings, where learners frequently struggle with speaking anxiety, limited opportunities for communicative practice, and instruction that is often examination-driven (Tavakoli & Wright, 2020), the integrated instructional approach provides a practical and adaptable framework for sustained oral development. By combining feedback with feedforward, the focus of classroom interaction shifts from mere evaluation of errors toward ongoing developmental support. This shift helps reduce anxiety and enhances learners' motivation, engagement, and sense of efficacy (Yang & Carless, 2013).

The integrated approach aligns well with learner-centered pedagogy, as it simultaneously strengthens fluency, accuracy, and complexity while nurturing self-regulation. Teachers can adopt reflective and anticipatory practices that promote planning, strategic monitoring, and post-task reflection. Institutions can further support these developments by offering professional training in formative and dialogic feedback practices (Carless & Boud, 2018), enabling instructors to embed these strategies more consistently. Practically, this implies a move away from traditional, error-focused correction toward a culture of developmental feedback. Embedding reflection, learner-generated goal-setting, and personalized feedforward into routine classroom activities can empower students, sustain their motivation, and cultivate skills that extend beyond formal instruction.

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