

## The Effect of Using Self-Directed Learning (SDL) On Speaking Fluency of Iranian EFL Students

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### Abstract

Self-directed Learning (SDL) refers to a Learner's self-sufficient capacity to control his or her studying process through perceiving oneself because the supply of one's moves and selections is a duty closer to one's lifelong studying. In an educational context, it is a method by which scholars can take the initiative, without or with the teacher, in making selections regarding their studying (Buitrago 2017). The present study aimed to investigate the effects of self-directed learning on the speaking fluency of Iranian EFL learners in one of the institutes in Zabul. In this research, first, a placement test was administered to choose the same proficiency level students. Then, 20 students were selected and randomly divided into two groups. Then pretest was administered to assure that the different results were because of using different methods. After that, the control group continued to develop their speaking fluency using directed learning, while the experimental group used SDL; finally, both groups were given a post-test. The results showed that the mean scores of the experimental group's post-test were higher than that of the control group. It showed that SDL has a significant impact on speaking fluency.

**Keywords:** language learning, self-directed learning, speaking fluency

### 1. Introduction

A language is a device used to talk with each other, so there may be know-how among the events involved. The language could make it less complicated for us to channel ideas, emotions, and many different things. In this world, many languages are used; even one country may have up to two languages. Moreover, in this contemporary world, many languages also are utilized by many humans. Those languages utilized by many humans are referred to as the English language (Putra 2020). Even though English today is used for many things. We were starting from education, business, and politics to technology. The importance of learning English in today's times cannot be underestimated or ignored, seeing English as the language spoken in most parts of the world (Putra 2020). "Students' learn English as a second and foreign

language. EFL is regarded as English as a Foreign Language, and ESL is called English as a Second Language. Before distinguishing EFL from ESL, there must be differences between foreign language and second language" (Longcope 2009). Iranian students usually learn English as a foreign language.

### **SLD**

"Self-directed learning is defined as a process of learning in which the individual establishes elements of control over their learning and characteristics of learners including self-efficacy and motivation" (Linkous 2021). Self-directed learning (SDL) performed a crucial function in improving obligations designed to expand and beautify oral fluency in EFL students(Buitrago 2017).

### **Speaking skill**

The goal of learning a language is directly connected with the listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills that are to be developed(Fandrych 2009). Speaking has always been a significant focus of language teaching. However, both the nature of speaking skills and approaches to teaching them have undergone a significant shift in thinking in recent years (Harchegani, Biria, and Nadi 2013).

Teachers sometimes avoid emphasis on speaking practice due to their workloads, the numerous topics to be covered in syllabi, lack of time to listen to every student, and students' low motivation regarding speaking in front of others. These issues might stem from insufficient planning and limited use of speaking strategies that would encourage students to improve their fluency and oral skills through meaningful speaking tasks(Buitrago 2017). That fluency is the usage of obviously taking place language while a speaker engages and continues in effective communication (Shahini and Shahamirian 2017). Therefore, the primary purpose of the study described in this article was to explain "How fluency in speaking might be fostered in Iranian students through the use of self-directed speaking tasks.

## **2. Statement of the problems**

Speaking is being capable of speaking, expressing, or exchanging thoughts through language(Mart 2012). English, the maximum huge unfolding language, turns into an Abby that will increase rapidly (Yavarian et al. 2015). In Iran, we can find many English teaching centers with various methods. However, students always say, "although we study English for many years, we still cannot speak it" over the last two decades. Of course, we should remember that people vary in their ability to communicate fluently. Some people use short silent pauses, while others talk of long silent pauses(Gemala 2021). So, because of the importance of speaking skills, the researcher tried to show the effects of SDL on the speaking fluency of Iranian students.

## **3. Research question**

Based on the above information, the following research question is characterized:  
Has SDL had a signification impact on speaking fluency?

#### **4. Research hypothesis**

SDL does not have a signification impact on speaking fluency.

#### **5. Methodology**

In this article, the researcher compared the effects of self-directed learning and directed learning on speaking fluency; SDL and DL are dependent variables, and speaking fluency is the independent variable. The present research is quasi-experimental that consists of one control and experimental group.

##### **Participants**

In this study, 45 intermediate EFL male and female students participated from Pardisan institute in Zabol, Sistan, and Baluchistan in 2022. Their age range is 15\_16. The researcher administers the Placement Test to them. Twenty of them with the same English proficiency level were chosen for the study. Half of the participants were randomly considered the control group, and the other half were selected as the experimental group.

##### **Instruments**

Instruments used in the study are:

1. a smartphone
2. A standard Placement Test ensures all chosen students are on the same English proficiency level.
3. A standard speaking test to assess the speaking fluency of both groups was a pretest; before that, participants of the experimental group started to learn the language by themselves.
4. Another standard speaking test is the post-test to see the effectiveness of self-directed learning on speaking fluency.

#### **6. Procedures**

##### **Data collection**

For collecting the data, the researcher distributed a proficiency test to ensure the students would be on the same level of proficiency (intermediate-level). Selected students were divided into two groups randomly; the control group and the experimental group. The experimental and control groups were given a proficiency speaking test to assess their speaking fluency. It measured the number of words, syllables, pauses, and dysfluency per minute. The pretest was administered to assure that the results differed because of two different methods. After that, members of the experimental group changed their learning methods. They start improving their speaking skill by themselves. They used self-directed learning instead of learning in the institute. At the same time, the control group continued working on their speaking skill in the institute. They used the directed learning method. The two groups were isolated from together wholly. After four months, a proficiency speaking test was administered as a post-test. It measures the number of words, syllables, pauses, and dysfluency per minute to consider the self-directed learning method's effects.

##### **Data analysis**

In this quantitative study, in order to find an answer to the research question, the data was collected. It means the participants' performance was measured in both pretest and post-

test. The data were analyzed by SPSS25. A t-test was calculated to assess the effects of SDL on students' speaking fluency development.

### 7. Results

This study investigates the different effects of self-directed language learning and directed language learning methods on speaking fluency.

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Words per minute</b>	control	10	8.6	1.68
	experimental	10	9	1.09
<b>Syllables per minute</b>	control	10	9.1	1.70
	experimental	10	9	1.26
<b>Pauses per minute</b>	control	10	15.5	1.80
	experimental	10	15.1	1.70
<b>Dysfluency per minute</b>	control	10	14.2	2.44
	experimental	10	14.8	1.60

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for *post-test* result

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Words per minute</b>	control	10	9.40	2.31
	experimental	10	13.50	2.01
<b>Syllables per minute</b>	control	10	9.70	1.94
	experimental	10	13	1.88
<b>Pauses per minute</b>	control	10	14.50	2.17
	experimental	10	9.40	1.34
<b>Dysfluency per minute</b>	control	10	14	2
	experimental	10	10.60	1.50

Table3. Normality test of scores

Variable	Group	Kolmogorov-smirnov			Shapiro-wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
<b>Words per minute</b>	control	0.169	10	0.200	0.945	10	0.613
	Experimental	0.220	10	0.200	0.896	10	0.196
<b>Syllables per minute</b>	control	0.222	10	0.176	0.888	10	0.160
	Experimental	0.220	10	0.200	0.019	10	0.344
<b>Pauses per minute</b>	control	0.255	10	0.064	0.898	10	0.210
	Experimental	0.217	10	0.200	0.896	10	0.198
<b>Dysfluency per minute</b>	control	0.210	10	0.102	0.837	10	0.410
	Experimental	0.255	10	0.065	0.862	10	0.080

H0: The mean is equal in both control and experimental groups.

H1: The mean is not equal in both control and experimental groups.

Based on the normality test, which is for the normality of observations, because the significance level of the test in both control and experimental groups is greater than the error level of 0.05, the normality of the observations is confirmed. So independent t-test can be used.

Table 4. Independent t-test result

Variable		Leven's Test		t-test		
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig.
Words	per	0.480	0.497	-4.221	18	0.001
minute						
Syllables	per	0.104	0.751	-3.851	18	0.001
minute						
Pauses	per	5.434	0.032	6.304	18	0.000
minute						
Dysfluency	per	3.633	0.073	4.295	18	0.000
minute						

According to Table (4), the Leven test examines the same variance in the two groups because the significance level of the test is greater than the error level of 0.05, so the assumption of the same variance in the control and experimental groups is accepted. Also, the t-test statistics are -4.221, -3.852, 6.394, 4.295, and the significance levels of the t-test are 0.001, 0.001, 0.000, 0.000, which are less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, it means the mean scores in the two groups of control and experiment are not equal.

### 8. Discussion and Conclusion

Both groups' scores in the pretest were almost equal (their scores did not differ significantly). However, after developing students' speaking fluency through two different methods, they obtained scores that differ significantly. Students that used SDL obtained better scores.

This research studied the effectiveness of SDL on speaking fluency development. Considering the results, SDL is more beneficial than other directed learning methods. The researcher believes that the result is because everyone knows their character better than others. Everyone can focus on their weaknesses and improve them.

Individually. While teachers may not know enough about their students' character. Teachers usually do not have enough time to focus on all their students' weak points individually and cannot improve them.

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