

**Research Article**

# Impact of Listening and Reading Skills Transfer on the Speaking Accuracy, Fluency, and Complexity of EFL Learners

Hadi Sobhanifar  and Fatemeh Ranjbaran\* 

English Language Department, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

\* **Corresponding author:** Fatemeh Ranjbaran, English Language Department, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Sultanate of Oman.  
Email: fatemeh.ranjbaran@nct.edu.om

**ARTICLE INFO****Article History:**

Received: 10/05/2023

Accepted: 13/06/2023

**Keywords:**Accuracy  
Complexity  
Fluency  
Skill transfer  
Speaking ability**ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** Over the past decades, enhancing learners' speaking ability has been a major challenge for teachers and educators of English as a foreign language (EFL). Therefore, the current study aimed to see if reading and listening can boost students' speaking ability in the process of skills transfer.

**Methodology:** To explore the impact of reading and listening skills transfer on enhancing speaking accuracy, fluency, and complexity, two groups of EFL learners underwent a four-month intervention in which the effects of reading and listening skills on speaking ability were evaluated. One group was exposed to text, and the other group received audio input. Both groups gave summaries after working on different textual and audio tasks. After four months of treatment, both classes took a posttest.

**Results:** The results showed that reading and listening, as a medium of input, boosted the speaking ability of learners. However, the class receiving listening input enjoyed a higher mean value in accuracy, fluency, and complexity and outperformed the class exposed to reading input.

**Conclusion:** This study highlights the role of skills transfer theory while providing evidence for educators and practitioners to incorporate integrated skills practice when designing EFL courses.

## 1. Introduction

In the history of language teaching and learning, issues concerning the speaking ability of language learners have been of crucial significance. Scholars have extensively investigated how the mechanism of speaking functions and how to identify the problems language learners face while developing their oral skills (Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2010; Kizi, 2023; Sample & Michel, 2014; Suzuki, 2021). Even though many researchers and practitioners have put forth suggestions on how to facilitate the process of developing speaking skills and overcome obstacles in improving students speaking ability (Bei, 2013; Fukuta, 2016; Tabatabaei, 2012), the effect of skill transfer on enhancing speaking ability still warrant further investigation.

A number of hypotheses have been proposed by scholars, such as Krashen's comprehensible input theory (1982), that accounts for enabling learners to acquire L2. Although Krashen was, to some extent successful, it was

Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis (1985) that supplemented Krashen's view and introduced a comprehensive theory regarding the use of input and the development of learners' speaking ability (Russell, 2014). The importance of English as the main lingua franca and the medium for the worldwide spread of information and knowledge has made communicative competence and the ability to use English to access social, vocational, educational, or professional opportunities one of the most vital objectives of English learning and teaching programs. In this regard, Davies and Pearse (2000) believed that real success in English is when the learners can communicate in English inside and outside the classroom. As Sanchez (2000) puts forth, the instructions developed within integrative language skills might be the most effective approach since teaching language as the medium of communication is the primary purpose of any language classroom. It is also commonly believed that skills

integration reinforces the efficiency of learning for the learners and teaching for the instructors (Su, 2007). Skills integration motivates teachers to make an effort to vary the educational material, tailoring them to the students' academic needs, enables the learners to freely, vividly, and naturally use the language and improves their ability to express themselves and become real risk takers when using the language which leads to an increase in learning outcomes. Therefore, the use of the integrative skills approach is inevitable if it enables the language learners to develop a solid source of English knowledge as well as improve their communicative competence, equipping them with the ability to share their ideas with other people in real-life settings (Skehan, 2009).

### **1.1. Review of the related literature**

According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), theoretical and experiential knowledge have signified the importance of integrating language skills. The learning and use of any one skill can trigger cognitive and communicative associations with the other skills, as supported by many linguists and educational scholars. For instance, in 1982, Krashen argued that reading is the primary means of developing reading comprehension, writing style, and advanced vocabulary and grammar. Listening could boost the awareness of learners in recognizing the connection between the sociolinguistic concept of form and function and the psycholinguistic processes of interpretation and expression (Ellis, 2003). Bygate (2018) found that the real time processing of listening activities, the exposure to language through reading, and the attention to form-meaning association in all skills boost speaking ability. In addition, by integrating language skills, teachers can provide different opportunities for learners with various learning styles and strategies. Integration of the skills in a language class enables the students to interact naturalistically. In a study by Pongsapan (2020), it was observed that the integration of debate techniques into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning context builds two-way interaction among students that hence improves their speaking skill. Odeh (2020) also integrated task-based language teaching methods to enhance the fluency and accuracy of Arab EFL learners and found the integration of TBLT tasks to be a valuable tool in improving communication skills, raising students' awareness toward speaking, and increasing their grammatical language consistency and automatic speech. Oxford (2001) believes that in the integrated-skill approach, learners rapidly face the true richness and complexity of the English language when used for communication. Another benefit of this approach is that it emphasizes the role of English as not just a subject matter, but as a real means of interaction and a medium for individuals to share their ideas. This approach enables teachers to assess students' progress in various language skills concurrently and has the potential to greatly motivate students.

### **1.2. The effect of listening and reading input on speaking**

Listening comprehension is the process in which one can comprehend spoken words in different ways, such as particular word meaning, sentence structure, and working knowledge of speech sounds. Hamouda (2013) defines listening as the listener's ability to comprehend and repeat back what has been heard, even though listeners only repeat the sounds and dialect they hear. It has been stated that individuals interact with each other actively in order to generate meaning in the listening comprehension process using their content and subject knowledge and understanding of phonology, subject knowledge, and discourse (Skehan, 2009).

Based on its unique features, listening plays a pivotal role in boosting speaking as it provides the necessary input to be used in oral production (Ramli & Kurniawan, 2017). Consequently, many scholars came to the idea of studying its effects on developing speaking mastery. In a study carried out by Fitria et al. (2015), the results revealed that listening to podcasts could improve students' speaking mastery substantially. During the process of teaching and learning, the use of podcasts, as another form of listening input commonly used in language classes, can help improve the speaking ability of the learners and the teachers simultaneously as they are rich in various supplied resources (Syofianis et al., 2015; Sze, 2006; Widiastuti, 2012). On a positive note, Bustari et al. (2017) also found that listening to podcasts boosts the learners' self-confidence, leading to improved speaking ability.

The other source of input used to improve learners' speaking ability is reading, including the reader's dynamic combination of information from a text and their background knowledge to build meaning and achieve the main goal of reading, namely comprehension (Nunan, 2003). Reading comprehension usually occurs when the reader absorbs the information from a text and combines it with his own background knowledge regarding the text's topic (Grabe & Fredricka, 2001). The two components in the reading comprehension process, namely recognition and comprehension, foster learners' language competence. Krashen and Terrell (1983) also believe that reading helps learners to comprehend better, which is an important factor for developing language competence.

The overflow of reading input facilitates language acquisition by boosting the target language features frequency of occurrence (Rashtchi & Yousefi, 2017; Zhang, 2009). Nan (2018) believes that without a sufficient source of vocabulary, meaningful communication in a second language collapses, and learners can boost their speaking competence if they are equipped with better vocabulary knowledge gained from reading. Grammar and vocabulary knowledge are considered two important facilitators of foreign language learning, especially speaking ability (Russell, 2014). Grammar helps students produce comprehensible sentences in speaking, usually by reading. When the learners are constantly exposed to the target

language, they begin noticing and mastering its patterns. According to McCarthy (2000), reading comprehension is heavily dependent on lexical and grammatical knowledge, meaning that learners' comprehension will be enhanced through grammar. As he puts forth, reading is encouraged as it is a great factor in foreign language improvement and students who read a lot are good at reading and writing and have a good vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Hence, they can incorporate the structures they gain through reading into oral skills.

Hedge (1985) believes that those who do a lot of extensive reading may boost both their comprehension of the context and improve their vocabulary, which are essential elements to boost speaking skills. Jones and Waller (2017) studied the impact of input enhancement on vocabulary learning. They found that textual enhancement and aural enhancement have significant effects on vocabulary retention, leading to better productivity. Oya et al. (2009) state that better vocabulary knowledge enhances oral performance. In other words, having good vocabulary knowledge is believed to be one of the most crucial factors in improving the accuracy and fluency of learners as well as increasing their confidence while they practice speaking in a foreign language classroom or a foreign country.

According to Levelt (1989; 1993), vocabulary plays an important role in the production of meaningful utterances, which are based on complete syntactic, morphological, and phonological structures. Moreover, the vocabulary consisting of lexemes includes not only vocabulary size (primary meaning and form) but also depth (syntax), both of which are integral parts of speaking performance (Rei, 2005). Zhang (2009) believes that integrating speaking and reading skills deepens the learner's understanding of the reading material, which also enables them to apply the information they have gained through the text into genuine speech practice, hence improving their fluency.

### **1.3. Transfer theory of learning**

According to the transfer theory of learning, as learning one skill is facilitated by another, a positive transfer occurs between them, and if learning interferes or blocks another skill, a negative transfer exists (Perkins & Salomon, 1999). Therefore, it is essential to delve into the linking aspects of the four language skills and make absolute use of their positive transfer in order to facilitate the comprehensive improvement of the four language skills (Nan, 2018). Without language input, there is no possibility of producing language, so learners must have a language database from which to generate the particular language needed to express what they want to say and the way to obtain that language is through both listening and reading input based on the tenets of previous theories that comprehensible input fosters L2 acquisition (Chastain, 1988; Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). In addition, as Merbah and Meulemans (2011) put forth, practice conditions that involve higher interference of skills would eventually lead to better retention and

transfer of acquired knowledge compared to a practice condition with lower interference.

According to the language acquisition theory of psycholinguistics, linguistic comprehension comes prior to linguistic production (Bygate, 2001). Linguistic comprehension is the basis for linguistic production since only adequate understanding can lead to effective expression, while sound linguistic production can enhance linguistic comprehension. This hypothesis, on which this study heavily relies, hinges on two tenets. First, the provision of input is not sufficient for speaking ability to be developed; therefore, there should be the opportunity to use this input. Secondly, learners should be prompted to both understand and use the input received, hence yielding the reciprocal process of language fluency (Gass, 1988).

This article sheds light on the implementation of an integrated language skills strategy to create a more vivid understanding of the effects of the two means of input, namely reading and listening, on improving language learners' speaking ability in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. To achieve this goal, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does reading input impact EFL learners' speaking in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity?
2. To what extent does listening input impact EFL learners' speaking in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity?
3. Which medium of input is more effective in boosting the speaking ability of EFL learners in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity (reading or listening)?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research design**

This study follows a quasi-experimental design, as the two groups of participants are selected from pre-existing classes at the university. Moreover, the study participants were divided into control and experimental groups. As the aim of this study was to reveal the most effective input for boosting the speaking ability of EFL learners, it included an educational intervention for both groups. Both groups were treated with a different medium of input, that is, one group received text as reading input and the other group audio as listening input.

### **2.2. Participants**

Participants for this study included 60 EFL students (12 female and 48 male) from a freshman General English course at a state university in Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchestan province, Iran. They were from the same first language background (i.e., Persian) and aged 18-20 years. They were all majoring in electrical and civil engineering. Their level of proficiency at the intermediate as they all scored between 50 and 60% on the English module of the national university entrance examination called Konkoor. Prior to the study, none of the students had previous study abroad experiences, and

**Table 1.**  
Demographic Data of the Study Participants

Groups	Number	Age	Gender
1	30	18-20 (M=18.7)	7 females, 23 males
2	30	18-20 (M= 19.2)	5 females, 25 males
Total	60	18-20 (M=18.95)	12 females, 48 males

had little opportunity to use English for communicative purpose outside the class. They had EFL learning experiences for about 6-10 years. As college students, their syllabus included four hours of English per week, two hours for reading and writing and two hours for listening and speaking. The students' placement into two classes of 30 students each was done randomly by university administration at the beginning of the school year (Table 1).

### 2.3. Instruments

#### 2.3.1. Pretest/posttest

An interview protocol containing 17 items was chosen from the First Certificate in English (FCE) Speaking Test arranged from low to high-elicitation load, to be used for the pretest/posttest. In order to validate the FCE Speaking test, the researchers asked five PhD holders in TEFL to check the questions and apply any necessary changes. The reliability of this test was established using a pilot test. That is, the FCE speaking test was applied to a different group of engineering students with the same conditions. The results revealed that the test was reliable enough to be applied in this study. Moreover, its lifelong credit proves that the reliability and validity of the FCE test is more than TOEFL or other tests (Al-Musawi & Al-Ansari, 1999). To assess the speaking ability of the participants, one of the most comprehensive tables of criteria proposed by Skehan (2009) was used. A review of the literature indicates that there is no other criterion that provides such a comprehensive account for analyzing and assessing aspects of speaking ability, namely fluency, accuracy and complexity (Ellis, 2007).

#### 2.3.2. Teaching materials

Listening materials were chosen from among monologues and dialogues. Interchange (Intermediate Level) audio files (Richards et al., 2005) and audio files from news websites were used for the listening class. An intermediate reading book, *Interactions* (Kirn & Hartmann, 2004) that included texts on a variety of topics, was used in the reading class. Some short stories taken from the book called *Stories for Reading Comprehension 3* (Hill, 1985) were also studied as text input in the reading class.

#### 2.3.3. Procedures

A total of 60 participants, including 12 females and 48 males, within the age range of 18 to 20 years, majoring in engineering were selected via the administration of an oral proficiency test. They were randomly divided into two 30-member groups. All of them were at an intermediate level

of English language. In the first stage, participants of both groups took part in the interview (Speaking Test of Cambridge FCE Exam) as pretest, including 17 questions. These questions were arranged in an easy-to-hard order. That is, the final questions elicited as much information as possible. The students' answers were recorded using a voice recorder.

Having participated in the pretests, the two groups participated in two sessions of treatment every week for a duration of 4 months. Each session lasted 90 minutes. In the listening class, the audio files of *Interchange* (Richards et al., 2005) book as well as other listening files such as were used as practice material. After working on each activity, the students were encouraged to talk through question and answer activities and give summaries. The same procedure was followed in the reading class; i.e., students worked on an intermediate reading book called *Interactions* (Kirn & Hartman, 2004), which included texts that were mostly informative and raised good topics for class discussions. In addition, participants worked on short stories taken from the book called *Stories for Reading Comprehension 3* (Hill, 1985). They were then encouraged to give summaries and to discuss the morals of the stories in groups.

After receiving four months of treatment, students were called in for the same interview as the one in which they participated at the beginning of the course as the pretest, and their responses were recorded. The pretest and posttest recordings were analyzed in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency based on Skehan's (2009) oral ability assessment criteria. The SPSS software version 20 was used to data analysis. The obtained results of pretests for both groups were subjected to an independent-sample t-test to ensure that there was no significant difference between these groups at the beginning of the treatment and to confirm the homogeneity of students in both groups. Then, two within-group analyses of scores (paired-sample t-tests) were conducted to reveal the within-group pretest and posttest differences. These analyses were done in order to reveal the changes in the performance of each group since the beginning of the treatments. Afterward, the posttest scores of both groups were compared using independent sample t-tests in order to see which input had substantially increased the speaking ability of the learners.

In order to show the homogeneity of both reading and listening classes, a comparison was made between their pretests. Second, a within-group comparison of means for both reading and listening classes was carried out in order to see how the subjects' performances had changed during the treatment period. After that, both groups' posttests were compared to show which group had a better performance after the treatment.

## 3. Results

In order to understand how the reading class has developed its speaking ability in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity, the pretests and posttests were compared using the paired samples t-test. As shown in Tables 2 and 3,

**Table 2.**  
*Reading Class Performance on Pretest and Posttest*

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Pair 1</b>	Accuracy pretest	30	71.3333	3.31489
	Accuracy posttest	30	83.8000	4.15559
<b>Pair 2</b>	Fluency pretest	30	155.7667	6.95643
	Fluency posttest	30	170.7000	6.00661
<b>Pair 3</b>	Complexity pretest	30	44.1333	2.76347
	Complexity posttest	30	50.3000	3.47553

**Table 3.**  
*Reading Class Paired-samples T-test*

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
<b>Pair 1</b>	Accuracy pre - posttest	-12.46667	4.96007	.90558	-14.31879	-10.61455	-13.766	29	.000
<b>Pair 2</b>	Fluency pretest - posttest	-14.93333	8.76881	1.60096	-18.20766	-11.65901	-9.328	29	.000
<b>Pair 3</b>	Complexity pretest - posttest	-6.16667	4.36351	.79666	-7.79603	-4.53730	-7.741	29	.000

the control group for the reading input indicated having a significant impact on students' speaking posttest results. As Table 2 shows, the mean values in the pretest and posttest for accuracy were 71.3 and 83.8, respectively, indicating considerable progress in students' accuracy. The second pair consisted of mean values of the fluency pretest and posttest (155.7 and 170.7, respectively), showing a considerable increase. The mean values of pretest and posttest for complexity as the third pair were 44.1 and 50.3, respectively, and revealed a notable growth in complexity. The development in the reading class's accuracy, fluency, and complexity along with the significance level of  $p < .05$  indicated a significant improvement in their speaking ability. In other words, reading input has improved the speaking ability of the reading class in terms of its accuracy, fluency and complexity, thus providing a positive response to the first research question that reading can boost the speaking ability of language learners.

In order to find out to what extent the listening class succeeded in boosting its speaking ability in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity, the pretests and posttests were compared via the paired-sample t-test. As indicated in Tables 4 and 5, the mean values for accuracy in the pretest and posttest were 71.23 and 90.76, respectively and its significance level testified the remarkable development in the students' accuracy level ( $p < .05$ ). The pretest and posttest mean values of 157.83 and 185.70, respectively, for the fluency as well as a significance level of  $p < .05$  shows a great development in fluency of students' speaking ability as well. The pretest

**Table 4.**  
*Listening Class Performance on the Pretest and Posttest*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
<b>Pair 1</b>	Accuracy pretest	71.2333	30	3.35984
	Accuracy posttest	90.7667	30	5.58744
<b>Pair 2</b>	Fluency pretest	157.8333	30	5.11983
	Fluency posttest	185.7000	30	3.23931
<b>Pair 3</b>	Complexity pretest	45.4667	30	2.62262
	Complexity posttest	54.1000	30	3.78153

and posttest mean values of 45.46 and 54.10 for the complexity as well as a significance level of  $p < .05$  also confirmed an increase in the complexity of students' speech. This justifies the claim that listening considerably enhances EFL learners' speaking in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity, thus responding to the second question that listening input does in fact influence speaking ability outcomes.

### 3.1. Performance of reading class and listening class on posttest

Considering the homogeneity of both groups, the researchers compared both of the obtained scores of classes' posttests in order to clarify which input had a greater effect on the speaking ability of students in terms of its accuracy, fluency, and complexity using the independent sample t-test.

The mean values for accuracy of the reading class and the listening class were 83.80 and 90.76, respectively. The difference between mean values ( $MD = -6.96$ ) on posttests along with the significance level of  $p < .05$  were indicative of a considerable boost in accuracy of the listening class. The mean values for fluency in the reading class and listening class were 170.70 and 185.70, respectively. The difference between the mean values of both groups ( $MD = -15$ ), along with the significance level of  $p < .05$  confirmed the better performance of the listening class in terms of fluency on the posttest. Regarding complexity, the mean difference ( $MD = -3.8$ ) along with the significance level of  $p < .05$  of the two groups revealed that EFL learners in the listening class indicated a greater development in terms of complexity based on the posttest results. These results confirm that listening input considerably enhances EFL learners' speaking accuracy, complexity, and fluency.

Table 6 tabulates the data on the participants' homogeneity in the two groups of listening and reading, which were obtained through pretests prior to the intervention.

**Table 5.**  
*Listening Class Paired-Sample T-test*

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
<b>Pair 1</b>	Accuracy pretest - posttest	-19.53333	5.34166	.97525	-21.52794	-17.53872	-20.029	29	.000
<b>Pair 2</b>	Fluency pretest - posttest	-27.86667	5.83529	1.06537	-30.04560	-25.68773	-26.157	29	.000
<b>Pair 3</b>	Complexity pretest - posttest	-8.63333	4.31104	.78708	-10.24310	-7.02356	-10.969	29	.000

**Table 6.**  
*Reading and Listening Class Performance on Pretest*

	Input	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Accuracy</b>	Reading	30	71.3333	3.31489
	Listening	30	71.2333	3.35984
<b>Fluency</b>	Reading	30	155.3333	6.68159
	Listening	30	157.8333	5.11983
<b>Complexity</b>	Reading	30	44.3000	2.71839
	Listening	30	45.4667	2.62262

Tables 5 and 6 display the mean value and significance level of both groups before the treatment. The mean values for the accuracy of the reading group and listening group were 71.33 and 71.23, respectively. Based on the significance level of .90 ( $p > .05$ ) and close mean values, the equality of both groups in terms of speaking accuracy was approved. The mean values for the fluency of the reading and listening group were 155.33 and 157.83, respectively, which also indicate near equality in terms of fluency of their speaking with a significance level of .109 ( $p > .05$ ). The mean values of the complexity in reading and listening groups were 44.30 and 45.46, respectively, revealing the homogeneity of the two groups with a significance level of .09 ( $p > .05$ ). Based on these findings, the researchers concluded that these groups enjoyed homogeneity.

After confirming that both groups were homogeneous, the researchers went on to compare both of the classes' posttests in order to clarify which input had a greater effect on the speaking ability of the subjects in terms of its accuracy, fluency, and complexity through the independent sample t-test. It was observed that listening was more effective in boosting the speaking ability of EFL learners in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity than reading, as shown in Tables 7 and 8.

The mean values for accuracy of the reading class and the listening class were 83.80 and 90.76, respectively. The difference between mean values (MD = -6.96) on posttests

**Table 8.**  
*T-test for Equality of Means*

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
<b>Accuracy</b>	Equal variances assumed	-5.480	58	.000	-6.96667	1.27133
	Equal variances not assumed	-5.480	53.566	.000	-6.96667	1.27133
<b>Fluency</b>	Equal variances assumed	-12.039	58	.000	-15.00000	1.24596
	Equal variances not assumed	-12.039	44.553	.000	-15.00000	1.24596
<b>Complexity</b>	Equal variances assumed	-4.052	58	.000	-3.80000	.93772
	Equal variances not assumed	-4.052	57.592	.000	-3.80000	.93772

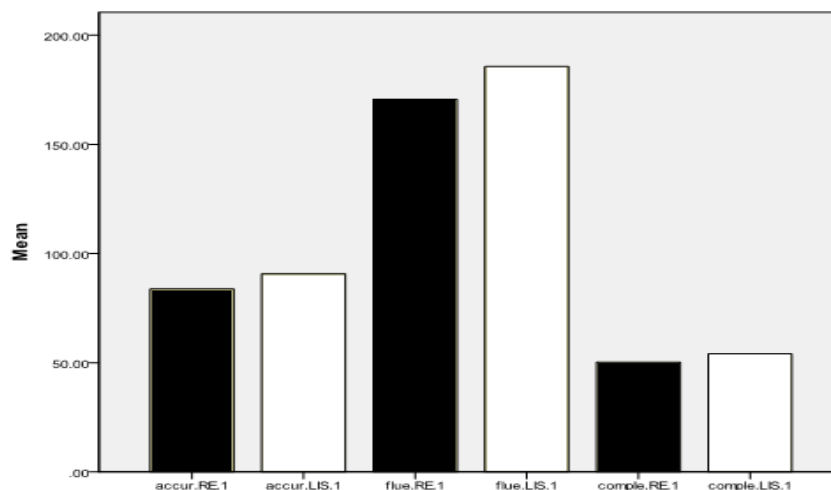
along with the significance level of  $p < .05$  showed a considerable boost in the accuracy of the listening class. The mean values for fluency of the reading and listening class were 170.70 and 185.70, respectively. The difference between the mean values of both groups (MD = -15) along with the significance level of  $p < .05$  confirmed better performance of the listening class in terms of fluency on the posttest. Moreover, the mean values for complexity were 50.30 and 54.10, respectively. This variance between mean values (MD = -3.8) along with the significance level of  $p < .05$  indicated that the listening class had a greater development in terms of complexity based on the posttest results. Therefore, it is confirmed that listening considerably enhances EFL learners' speaking complexity.

Figure 1 gives a more tangible account of statistical interpretations concerning reading and listening class posttest comparisons. Bars in this chart suggest that the listening class outperformed the reading class on the speaking posttest in terms of its accuracy, fluency, and complexity.

As the statistical analyses indicated, both types of input provided for two classes of EFL learners provided learners with a substantial boost in their speaking ability in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity with a significance level of  $p < .05$ . However, listening had a greater effect on the speaking ability of the participants in this study.

**Table 7.**  
*Reading and Listening Class Performance on the Posttest*

	Input	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Accuracy</b>	Reading	30	83.8000	4.15559
	Listening	30	90.7667	5.58744
<b>Fluency</b>	Reading	30	170.7000	6.00661
	Listening	30	185.7000	3.23931
<b>Complexity</b>	Reading	30	50.3000	3.47553
	Listening	30	54.1000	3.78153



**Figure 1.**  
*Reading and Listening Class Posttest Comparison*

#### 4. Discussion

The results of the present study indicated the positive impact of reading and listening skills transfer on developing the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of students speaking ability. This follows the notion that frequent use of language skills in the classroom can create comprehensible input and thus enhance learning (Ellis, 2007; Gass, 1998). In response to the first and second research questions, both reading and listening skills had a considerable impact on the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of speaking skill outcomes. With regard to a comparison of these two forms of input, in response to the third research question, the findings reveal the higher impact of listening input compared to reading. These findings are in contradiction to a similar study conducted by Rashtchi and Yousefi (2017). They found the outperformance of the reading input group, compared to the listening group, while using American English File for both reading and listening input flooding. However, their intervention lasted 2 months, which was half the duration of the current study. In another study by Tabatabaei and Yakhabi (2009), it was shown that comprehensible input and output positively affect the accuracy and complexity of L2 speaking, which is in line with the present study findings. This signifies that the research on the effect of listening and reading skill transfer concerning the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of speaking is limited and indecisive, which warrants further investigation, especially with innovative forms of input that are available in the digital era.

In a study by Hamad et al. (2019), who focused solely on listening input, it was revealed that employing YouTube videos and audio track imitation has a positive impact on the effectiveness of speaking skills, fluency, and pronunciation of EFL learners. Meanwhile, in another study by Purwanti et al. (2022) in the Indonesian context, while YouTube videos were found to have a positive impact on enhancing the students' speaking skills, specifically pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, intonation, grammar,

and fluency, the many challenges created by the use of these videos could pose threats to the learning process, unless the right strategies are used to cope with the challenges.

Recently, Suvarnapaet and Suvarnapaet (2023) provided suggestions for using Podcasts as authentic material to assist students in improving their speaking skills. In their study, it is emphasized that if implemented correctly by educators, podcasts can be used successfully to mitigate some challenges in developing students' oral communication skills. While a plethora of research has shown the impact of listening skill transfer on the speaking ability of second language learners (Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2010; Bei, 2013; Boers, 2014; Bygate, 2001, 2018; Fukuta, 2016; Lambert et al., 2017; Lynch & Maclean, 2000, 2001), fewer studies have focused on the impact of reading, specifically in different contexts (McCarthy, 2000; Peacock, 1997; Zhang, 2009). Further experimental studies are warranted to investigate various types of reading and listening input and their impact on oral performance, while also making a comparison of the effects of accuracy, fluency, and complexity.

#### 5. Conclusion

This study was conducted in order to compare listening and reading input as the most impactful means of boosting the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of EFL learners' speaking ability. The obtained results indicated that both reading and listening could increase the speaking level of subjects in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity, while listening has a more profound effect. Furthermore, it was found that listening was more effective in boosting the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of subjects' speaking due to higher mean values in accuracy, fluency, and complexity. The results of this study can be integrated into curriculum design, focusing on the emphasis on listening activities to enhance speaking skills. Moreover, they can help teachers to liven up their classes through blended learning to encourage students to study the language more comprehensively. Meanwhile, learners can become more autonomous in the process of

language learning since the integration of reading and listening to enhance speaking enables them to gain as much language knowledge as possible. Drawing on the benefits of listening and reading to improve the speaking ability of learners, material developers can enrich content by providing a mixture of more purposeful supplementary reading and listening input to improve the speaking ability of second language learners.

While all research studies face some limitations, this research was no exception. One of the study limitations was the sample population, which was limited to one university in southern Iran. Future studies could include a larger scope and context, including a comparison of different regions and nationalities. Moreover, future studies could include this variable in their results to investigate the role of gender and skills transfer. Furthermore, this study was conducted to introduce the best input for developing speaking ability in terms of its accuracy, fluency, and complexity, and future research can be focused on how these three factors affect each other. That is, how a change in the level of one factor impacts the other factors. In addition, our study input included only a limited selection of audio and textual input. Future studies could experiment with innovative technology integration and skill transfer through the many applications that are now being made available in the digital age of language learning.

## Declarations

### Competing interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Availability of data and materials

Data pertaining to the research study are available online upon request.

### Ethical considerations

Written informed consent was obtained from participants of this research study.

### Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the students and teachers who participated in this research study.

## References

Ahmadian, M. J., & Tavakoli, M. (2010). The effects of simultaneous use of careful online planning and task repetition on accuracy, complexity, and fluency in EFL learners' oral production. *Language Teaching Research*, 15(1): 35-59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168810383329>

- Al-Musawi, N. M., & Al-Ansari, S. H. (1999). Test of English as a foreign language and first certificate of English tests as predictors of academic success for undergraduate students at the University of Bahrain. *System*, 27(3), 389-399. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X\(99\)00033-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(99)00033-0)
- Bei, G. X. (2013). Effects of immediate repetition in L2 speaking tasks: A focused study. *English Language Teaching*, 6(1), 11-19. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n1p11>
- Boers, F. (2014). A reappraisal of the 4/3/2 activity. *RELC Journal*, 45(3), 221-35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688214546964>
- Bustari, A., Abdul Samad, I., & Achmad, D. (2017). The use of podcasts in improving students' speaking skill. *Journal of English Language and Education*, 3(2), 97-111. <http://ejournal.mercubuana-yogya.ac.id/index.php/jele/article/view/256>
- Bygate, M. (2001). Effects of task repetition on the structure and control of oral language. *Researching Pedagogic Tasks*. Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315838267-3/effects-task-repetition-structure-control-oral-language-bygate>
- Bygate, M. (2018). *Learning language through task repetition*, (pp. 1-25). John Benjamins, Amsterdam. <https://www.torrossa.com/en/resources/an/5000674>
- Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing second-language skills: Theory and practice*. Brace Janovich Publishers.
- Davies, P., & Pearse, E. (2000). *Success in English teaching: A complete introduction to teaching English at secondary school level and above*. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2007). 31 Explicit form-focused instruction and second language acquisition. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics*, (pp. 437-455). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Fitria, U., Vianty, M., & Petrus, I. (2015). Using podcast to improve students' listening and speaking achievements. *The Journal of English Literacy Education: The Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language*, 2(1), 55-68. <https://doi.org/10.36706/jele.v2i1.2218>
- Fukuta, J. (2016). Effects of task repetition on learners' attention orientation in L2 oral production. *Language Teaching Research*, 20(3), 321-340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168815570142>
- Gass, S. (1988). Integrating research areas: A framework for second language studies. *Applied Linguistics*, 9(2), 198-217. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/9.2.198>
- Grabe, W., & Fredricka S. (2001). Reading for academic purposes guidelines for the ESL/EFL teacher. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second foreign language*. Heinle and Heinle.
- Hamad, M. M., Metwally, A. A., & Alfuruque, S. Y. (2019). The impact of using YouTubes and audio tracks imitation YATI on improving speaking skills of EFL learners. *English Language Teaching*, 12(6), 191-198. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n6p191>
- Hamouda, A. (2013). An investigation of listening comprehension problems encountered by Saudi students in the EL listening classroom. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 2(2), 113-155.
- Hedge, T. (1985). *Using readers in language teaching*. Macmillan Publishers Ltd, London. <https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1130282269261080320>
- Hill, L. A. (1985). *Stories for reading comprehension*. Longman.
- Jones, C., & Waller, D. (2017). The effect of input enhancement on vocabulary learning: Is there an impact upon receptive and productive knowledge?. *TESOL International Journal*, 12(1), 48-62. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1247959.pdf>
- Kirn, E., & Hartmann, P. (2004). *Interactions II: Reading*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, McGraw-Hill College.
- Kizi, M. Y. I. (2023). Information gap activities in enhancement of speaking skills. *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Development*, 11, 1-4. <http://www.ejird.journalspark.org/index.php/ejird/article/view/291>
- Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. Pergamon.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). A post-method perspective on English language teaching. *World Englishes*, 22(4), 539-550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2003.00317.x>
- Lambert, C., Kormos, J., & Minn, D. (2017). Task repetition and second language speech processing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*,



- 39(1), 167-196. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263116000085>
- Levelt, W. J. M. (1989). *Speaking: From intention to articulation*. MIT Press.
- Levelt, W. J. M. (1993). Lexical access in speech production. *Knowledge and Language* (pp. 241-251). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Lynch, T., & Maclean, J. (2000). Exploring the benefits of task repetition and recycling for classroom language learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 4(3), 221-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/136216880000400303>
- Lynch, T., & Maclean, J. (2001). Effects of immediate task repetition on learners' performance. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks. Second language learning, teaching and testing* (pp. 99-118). Longman.
- McCarthy, F. (2000). Lexical and grammatical knowledge in reading and listening comprehension by foreign language learners of Spanish. *Applied Language Learning*, 11, 323-348.
- Merbah, S., & Meulemans, T. (2011). Learning a motor skill: Effects of blocked versus random practice: A review. *Psychologica Belgica*, 51, 15-48. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5334/pb-51-1-15>
- Mohammadi, N., & Ghaemi, F. (2022). The impact of noticing and output tasks on the mastery of English phrasal verbs among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 9(1), 43-63. <http://www.jallr.com/~jallrir/index.php/JALLR/article/view/1224/1345>
- Nan, C. (2018). Implications of interrelationship among four language skills for high school English teaching. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(2), 418-423. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0902.26>
- Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English language teaching*. The McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Odeh, B. (2020). The use of task-based language teaching method in Enhancing student's fluency and accuracy. *Asian EFL Journal*, 27(4.6), 115-132. <https://ksascholar.dri.sa/en/publications/the-use-of-task-based-language-teaching-method-in-enhancing-stude-3>
- Oxford, R. (2001). Integrated skills in the ESL/EFL classroom. *ERIC Digest*, 4, 1-7. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED456670.pdf>
- Oya, T., Manalo, E., & Greenwood, J. (2009). The influence of language contact and vocabulary knowledge on the speaking performance of Japanese students of English. *The Open Applied Linguistics Journal*, 2(1), 11-21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/1874913500902010011>
- Peacock, M. (1997). The effect of authentic materials on the motivation of EFL learners. *ELT Journal*, 51(2), 144-156. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/51.2.144>
- Perkins, D., & Salomon, G. (1999). Transfer of learning. *Theory into Practice*, 38(2), 134-141.
- Pongsapan, N. (2020). A technique to advancing students' speaking skill in a foreign language classroom. *Asian EFL Journal*, 27(5.1), 310-324. <http://repository.ukitoraja.ac.id/id/eprint/64/2/Jl%201%20TN.pdf>
- Purwanti, N. K. R., Suwastini, N. K. A., Adnyani, N. L. P. S., & Kultsum, U. (2022). YouTube videos for improving speaking skills: The benefits and challenges according to recent research in EFL context. *Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi Dan Kejuruan*, 19(1), 66-75. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jptk-undiksha.v19i1.41108>
- Rashtchi, M., & Yousefi, L. M. (2017). Reading input flooding versus listening input flooding: Can they boost speaking skill. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 5(1), 39-58. <https://doi:10.1515/jolace-2017-0003>
- Ramli, A. M., & Kurniawan, E. H. (2017). The use of podcast to improve students' listening and speaking skills for EFL learners. Proceedings of the International Conference on English Language Teaching (ICONELT 2017): Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research. <https://doi.org/10.2991/iconelt-17.2018.42>
- Richards, J. C., Hull, J., & Proctor, S. (2005). *Interchange student's book 3*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rie, K. (2005). *Relationships between productive vocabulary knowledge and speaking performance of Japanese learners of English at the novice level* (Doctoral dissertation), University of Tsukuba. <https://tsukuba.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/20705/files/1.pdf>
- Russell, V. (2014). A closer look at the output hypothesis: The effect of pushed output on noticing and inductive learning of the Spanish future tense. *Foreign Language Annals*, 47(1), 25-47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12077>
- Sample, E., & Michel, M. (2014). An exploratory study into trade-off effects of complexity, accuracy, and fluency on young learners' oral task repetition. *TESL Canada Journal* 31, 23-46. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v31i0.1185>
- Sanchez, I. M. (2000). Motivating and maximizing learning in minority classrooms. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 112, 35-44. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.11203>
- Skehan, P. (2009). Modelling second language performance: Integrating complexity, accuracy, fluency and lexis. *Applied Linguistics*, 30, 510-532. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amp047>
- Su, Y. C. (2007). Students' changing views and the integrated-skills approach in Taiwan's EFL college classes. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 8, 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03025831>
- Suvarnaphaet, K. M., & Suvarnaphaet, P. (2023). Use of podcasts to develop students' speaking skills. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*, 23(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.14456/hasss.2023.1>
- Syofianis, S., Marhamah, M., & Oktasari, L. (2015). The effect of using podcast towards the listening comprehension of THE second semester students of English study program of Islamic University of RIAU. *Proceedings of ISELT FBS Universitas Negeri Padang*, 3: 487-492. <http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/selt/article/view/6891>
- Suzuki, Y. (2021). Optimizing fluency training for speaking skills transfer: Comparing the effects of blocked and interleaved task repetition. *Language Learning*, 71(2), 285-325. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12433>
- Sze, P. M. M. (2006). Developing students' listening and speaking skills through ELT podcasts. *Education Journal, Chinese University of Hong Kong*, 34(2), 115-134.
- Tabatabaei, O. (2012). The effect of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) on learning idiomatic expressions: A case of Iranian EFL students. *Journal of Language, Culture, and Translation*, 1(1), 119-137. [https://journals.iau.ir/article\\_551420\\_c7afc190f26c03c24d1a37360720b95b.pdf](https://journals.iau.ir/article_551420_c7afc190f26c03c24d1a37360720b95b.pdf)
- Tabatabaei, O., & Yakhabi, M. (2009). The effect of comprehensible input and comprehensible output on the accuracy and complexity of Iranian EFL learners' oral speech. *The Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2 (2), 218-245. [https://www.sid.ir/EN/VEWSSID/J\\_pdf/1009720090510.pdf](https://www.sid.ir/EN/VEWSSID/J_pdf/1009720090510.pdf)
- Widiastuti, O. (2012). Enhancing students' listening skill through podcasts. *Jurnal Linguistik Terapan*, 42-49. <http://jurnal.polinema.ac.id/index.php/jlt/article/view/251/141>
- Zhang, Y. (2009). Reading to speak: Integrating oral communication skills. *English Teaching Forum*, 2009(1), 32-34. [https://dx.doi.org/10.1061/41052\(346\)25](https://dx.doi.org/10.1061/41052(346)25)