

Special Issue

Exploring the Role of Vocabulary Instruction Modes in Enhancing Speaking Proficiency among Iranian EFL Learners in Flipped Classrooms

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency within a flipped classroom context. Sixty male and female learners, aged 14 to 17, from the Iran Language Institute in Tehran (the capital of Iran), participated in the study. Following a general English proficiency test, participants were divided into two experimental groups: one received implicit vocabulary instruction, and the other received explicit instruction. Speaking proficiency was assessed through pre- and post-intervention oral tests. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22. The findings indicate that flipped instruction significantly enhanced learners' speaking skills. Additionally, both implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction positively influenced speaking proficiency; however, explicit instruction yielded greater improvements. These results suggest that integrating innovative instructional methods, such as flipped learning combined with explicit vocabulary teaching, can effectively support EFL learners' oral language development. The study offers practical implications for curriculum developers and language educators seeking to optimize vocabulary instruction strategies in communicative language teaching to enhance educational quality.

Keywords: Explicit Instruction, Flipped Classroom, Implicit Instruction, Speaking Proficiency, Vocabulary

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Introduction

Learning a foreign language such as English necessitates the application of innovative and effective teaching methodologies, particularly because language learning is inherently a social process that thrives on active learner participation (Huang et al., 2025). In the Iranian EFL context, learners often face limited exposure to English outside the classroom, resulting in language learning deficiencies and overall weak proficiency (Amiryousefi, 2019). The integration of mobile technologies into language education has become increasingly prominent in recent years, particularly in the domain of vocabulary acquisition. A growing body of literature suggests that mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) offers considerable advantages for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Kazemainy et al., 2020). These tools, including smartphones and specialized language-learning applications, provide flexible, context-sensitive, and interactive learning opportunities that extend beyond the classroom. Accordingly, the system of learning moves towards the digitalization of education (Barjesteh et al., 2022; Isaee & Barjesteh, 2023b). Recent research (i.e., Hiver et al., 2024; Jiang & Zhao, 2025; Huang et al., 2025; Olana, 2024) has demonstrated that using mobile devices and relevant apps has yielded promising outcomes, particularly in enhancing learners' motivation and engagement with vocabulary learning tasks. The immediacy of access, gamified interfaces, and personalized feedback available through mobile platforms contribute to an enriched learning experience, facilitating deeper lexical retention and active learner participation (Kazemainy et al., 2023). Overall, the incorporation of mobile

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technology in vocabulary instruction not only supports autonomous learning but also fosters sustained interest and improved performance among EFL learners.

The theoretical foundation of the flipped classroom model draws from constructivist and social learning theories, emphasizing the learner's active role in constructing knowledge through interaction and reflection (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). In this model, class time is no longer dominated by teacher-led instruction but is instead dedicated to communicative activities that encourage learners to apply vocabulary and language structures in meaningful contexts. This student-centered approach is particularly beneficial for developing speaking proficiency, as it fosters more opportunities for authentic language use, peer collaboration, and immediate feedback from instructors (Boskovic & Hecimovic, 2025). Furthermore, by shifting the initial exposure to vocabulary and content to pre-class activities, students come to class better prepared to engage in interactive speaking tasks, which can lead to greater confidence and fluency over time. The flipped classroom model offers a promising alternative by enabling learners to engage with instructional content, such as teacher-curated educational videos, PowerPoint presentations, audio materials, and supplementary readings outside the classroom (Korkmaz & Karataş, 2023; Li et al., 2023). This shift allows classroom time to be repurposed for interactive discussions, critical thinking exercises, collaborative tasks, and other student-centered activities that promote deeper learning (Barjesteh & Isaei, 2024).

Although the flipped learning model has gained global traction in recent years (Rachmawati, 2022), its application in EFL contexts, particularly in Iran, remains under-researched. A few studies have examined its effectiveness, primarily in writing instruction. For instance, Fathi and Rahimi (2022) found that the flipped approach had a positive effect on students' writing performance. Similarly, Khosravi et al. (2023) explored the effect of implementing writing

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metacognitive strategies via flipped classrooms on the Iranian EFL learners' achievement, anxiety, and self-efficacy in writing. Their findings evidenced considerable enhancement in the writing performance of the students who underwent instruction through flipped classrooms in comparison to those in the traditional classroom setting.

In the past two decades, various models of flipped instruction have emerged, and a growing body of theoretical and empirical research continues to explore their pedagogical benefits (Bagherkazemi & Rabi, 2024; College Park et al., 2023; Herreid & Schiller, 2013; Huang et al., 2025). The model has gradually been adapted for EFL settings, but gaps remain in how vocabulary instruction, particularly implicit versus explicit approaches, can be effectively integrated within this framework. While vocabulary and grammar knowledge are essential components of language learning, they do not automatically translate into communicative competence. Many EFL learners, despite possessing a broad lexical repertoire, struggle with spoken and written production due to inadequate activation of vocabulary knowledge (Anam, 2017; Huang et al., 2025). Thus, understanding how vocabulary instruction methods influence speaking proficiency in flipped contexts is of critical importance.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on flipped learning by uniquely examining the comparative effects of implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction on speaking proficiency among Iranian EFL learners, as an area that remains underexplored in current literature. While previous studies have focused primarily on writing or general language outcomes, this research addresses a critical gap by targeting oral language development within a flipped classroom framework. The novelty of the study lies in its integration of vocabulary instruction modes into pre-class and in-class activities, offering practical insight into how instructional design can enhance communicative competence. The findings are expected to inform pedagogical

practices and curriculum development in EFL settings, particularly in contexts with limited opportunities for authentic spoken interaction outside the classroom.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the comparative impact of implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency in a flipped learning environment (e.g., Bagherkazemi & Rabi, 2024; Fardin et al., 2022). This study aims to address this gap by investigating the effectiveness of these instructional approaches in enhancing learners' oral language skills. Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: To what extent does teaching vocabulary implicitly have a significant impact on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency in a flipped classroom context?

RQ2: To what extent does teaching vocabulary explicitly have a significant impact on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency in a flipped classroom context?

RQ3: Is there a significant difference between implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction in terms of their effect on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency in a flipped classroom context?

Literature Review

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is grounded in several key theories of second language acquisition (SLA) and instructional design. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly beyond their current proficiency level ($i+1$), emphasizing the importance of meaningful exposure in language learning. Complementing this, Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990) asserts that conscious awareness of language features is essential for acquisition, highlighting the role of attention in learning processes.

In terms of instructional design, Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (1988) suggests that learning is optimized when instructional materials are designed to reduce unnecessary cognitive load, allowing learners to process new information more effectively. The flipped classroom model aligns with this theory by shifting the acquisition of new content to pre-class activities, thereby freeing up classroom time for interactive, higher-order learning tasks that reinforce and apply knowledge. These theoretical frameworks collectively inform the investigation into how implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction within a flipped classroom setting can impact EFL learners' oral proficiency (Bagherkazemi & Rabi, 2024; Kashef et al., 2023).

Implicit and Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary acquisition is a fundamental component of language proficiency, and instructional approaches can significantly influence learning outcomes. According to Norris and Ortega's (2001) research, Explicit instruction involves direct teaching of vocabulary items, including definitions, usage, and pronunciation, often through structured activities. In contrast, implicit instruction relies on exposure to vocabulary within meaningful contexts, allowing learners to infer meanings without direct explanation (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2024). Recent research has explored the efficacy of these approaches. A study by Kaivanpanah et al. (2021) examined the effects of explicit, implicit, and modified-implicit instruction on EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention. The findings indicated that both explicit and modified-implicit instruction led to superior vocabulary acquisition and retention compared to purely implicit methods, suggesting that incorporating elements of explicit instruction can enhance vocabulary learning outcomes. These findings underscore the potential benefits of combining explicit instructional strategies with

meaningful contextual exposure, particularly in settings where vocabulary acquisition is a key objective.

Flipped Learning and Oral Proficiency

Flipped instruction, or the flipped classroom model, has gained considerable attention in language education, especially for improving speaking skills among EFL learners. The origins of flipped instruction can be traced to the 1960s, when Gregor Novak, a physics educator, recognized that his students were often too fatigued to concentrate effectively in class. To address this, Novak introduced a model where students reviewed course materials before class, enabling more interactive and collaborative learning during class time. This approach evolved in the 1980s, alongside technological innovations, leading to the creation of Just-in-Time Teaching (JITT). In JITT, students completed brief assignments before class, allowing instructors to adjust their lessons based on student responses (Ma & Huang., 2024). In the early 1990s, Eric Mazur at Harvard University adopted a similar strategy to boost student engagement in physics. He encouraged students to study physics concepts outside of class and used class time for discussions, although he did not initially rely on technology. Mazur's approach, which later included creating concise video lessons, was designed to simplify complex topics and promote peer learning (Lee & Wallace, 2018). By 1996, researchers at Miami University introduced the term "inverted classroom," which is now commonly referred to as flipped instruction. In this model, students engage with lecture materials before attending class discussions. The model evolved further with the emergence of online platforms, which replaced traditional media with digital content accessible to students. The proliferation of mobile devices also contributed to the increased accessibility of educational resources (Bonyadi, 2025).

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The flipped classroom model has gained prominence in language education for its potential to enhance learner engagement and proficiency. By delivering instructional content outside of class, typically through videos or readings and utilizing classroom time for interactive activities, the flipped model aims to foster deeper learning and skill application (Bell, 2015; Lee & Choi, 2019; Lee & Wallace, 2018; Ma et al., 2024; Ma & Huang, 2024).

Some Related Studies

Rachmawati (2022) conducted a study on EFL learners and found that incorporating online collaborative activities into the flipped classroom significantly improved students' oral learning skills. The study highlighted the importance of synchronous, collaborative learning environments in enhancing speaking abilities. Rachmawati (2022) highlighted the value of digital tools in supporting flipped learning and their positive effect on EFL students' speaking proficiency. Additionally, he emphasized that flexible, self-paced learning deepens students' interaction with content.

In a similar vein, Demir and Mirzaie (2023) found that EFL learners involved in flipped learning environments achieved greater progress in speaking compared to those in traditional classrooms. This improvement was largely attributed to the model's emphasis on peer interaction and collaboration. Zhang et al. (2023) reported that students participating in flipped settings demonstrated greater academic achievement and engagement. Yoon (2023) examined the integration of English dialogue exercises within a flipped framework, concluding that structured practice combined with prior preparation significantly improved learners' pronunciation and lexical skills. Kristyowati et al. (2023) also observed gains in learners' speaking fluency and confidence, with female participants showing higher levels of involvement. Supporting these

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findings, a meta-analysis by Chen Hsieh et al. (2016) revealed that flipped instruction consistently boosts student outcomes and satisfaction across disciplines. Nonetheless, challenges such as limited access to technology and initial student reluctance were acknowledged. Shabani (2023) found that flipped models incorporating high levels of interaction lead to more substantial gains in speaking performance compared to less interactive approaches.

Khatouni et al., (2024) researched the impact of flipped instruction on developing Iranian ELF speaking skills. This research involved 60 Iranian EFL university students divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received flipped instruction, while the control group followed traditional methods. Results indicated that the experimental group showed significant improvements in speaking skills post-intervention, whereas the control group did not exhibit notable changes. This suggests that flipped instruction can effectively enhance EFL learners' speaking abilities.

Tuyen et al. (2024) demonstrated that implementing the flipped classroom model among non-English majors significantly enhanced their speaking abilities. The research underscored the critical role of pre-class preparation and communicative in-class activities, particularly for learners with minimal English exposure outside academic settings. The study also identified gender-related variations in engagement, indicating the need for further exploration into how flipped instruction may impact male and female students differently.

Bonyadi (2025) examined the effects of flipped learning on second language development in a higher education context. The study revealed that students in the flipped classroom demonstrated notable improvements in language performance, particularly in reading and listening skills, compared to those in traditional settings. These studies suggest that the flipped classroom model,

especially when combined with collaborative and interactive activities, can effectively enhance oral proficiency among EFL learners.

Methodology

Research Design and Participants

This study employed a quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest design with two experimental groups to investigate the effects of implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency in a flipped classroom setting. Given the nature of the research questions and the practical constraints in random assignment, a quasi-experimental approach was deemed most appropriate. Participants were selected through convenience sampling from intermediate-level learners at the Iran Language Institute in Tehran, Iran. Initially, 75 male and female learners aged 14 to 17 were administered the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) to determine language proficiency. Sixty learners whose scores fell within one standard deviation above or below the mean were selected, ensuring a relatively homogeneous sample. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups: group 1 received implicit vocabulary instruction and group 2 received explicit vocabulary instruction. All participants were Persian native speakers with no prior experience living or studying in English-speaking countries. They had at least 2.5 years of English language learning experience. The same instructor, who also served as the researcher, conducted all treatment sessions. The study was conducted during the second academic semester of the 2021–2022 academic year.

Instruments

Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

The Oxford Placement Test (OPT), developed by Oxford University Press (2001), was used to ensure participants' homogeneity in English proficiency before treatment. The test comprised 60 items covering reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. It included:

- Items 1–20: Cloze passage with multiple-choice questions assessing reading.
- Items 21–40: Grammar-focused multiple-choice questions.
- Items 41–60: Vocabulary questions based on contextual cloze items.

Oral Pre- and Post-tests

To assess speaking proficiency, participants completed unstructured oral interviews as both pretests and posttests. Each interview involved ten familiar topics, with five guiding questions per topic. Topics were aligned with the storybooks used in classroom drama activities. Given the learners' relatively low proficiency, interviews were informal and lasted approximately five minutes per student. All interviews were recorded and scored independently by both the instructor and a second rater. Inter-rater reliability was calculated to ensure score consistency. The speaking performance was assessed using Ur's (1996) oral assessment scale, which rates two key dimensions on a five-point scale (maximum total: 10 points). To standardize results, scores were multiplied by two, producing a final score out of 20. Post-tests were administered under identical conditions after four months of treatment.

Instructional Materials

The primary instructional material was *Touchstone 3* by Sandiford, McCarten, and McCarthy (2010), tailored for intermediate learners. The book includes reading passages, dialogs, and vocabulary activities designed to reinforce spoken language development. Supplementary materials included multimedia resources and speaking exercises adapted for flipped instruction.

Procedure

Both experimental groups participated in flipped classroom instruction. Before each class session, learners accessed content such as videos, readings, and vocabulary lists via WhatsApp and digital forums. Classroom time was dedicated to interaction, collaborative learning, and guided practice. The focus was on vocabulary development as a pathway to enhancing speaking skills.

Implicit Vocabulary Instruction

Participants in the implicit group engaged with vocabulary indirectly through contextualized reading and speaking activities. Instruction focused on predicting text content using titles, topic sentences, and keywords, engaging in peer discussions to infer meanings, reading texts such as *Six Simple Steps to Make Progress towards Achieving a Goal*, and summarizing content orally and responding to comprehension questions.

Vocabulary items were not explicitly taught; instead, meaning was negotiated through context and interaction. The teacher provided limited scaffolding by offering meanings of select high-frequency words predicted to be challenging.

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Participants in the explicit group received direct vocabulary instruction before engaging with texts. Procedures included introducing vocabulary explicitly via word lists, definitions, visuals, and sentence examples, using Persian-language analogies to clarify unfamiliar English structures, exploring collocations and lexical combinations (e.g., *make progress*), and Practicing with dictionaries and structured comprehension tasks. Texts used in this group mirrored those in the implicit group. However, instruction prioritized explicit explanation and memorization of vocabulary items before students engaged with the reading or speaking tasks.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, maximum and minimum scores) were first calculated to summarize pre- and post-test performance. To examine the effectiveness of each instructional approach, paired-samples t-tests were used to compare pre- and post-test scores within each group (implicit and explicit). An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the two instructional methods in terms of speaking proficiency gains. This analytical approach addressed all three research questions and tested the null hypotheses regarding the impact of vocabulary instruction modes on EFL speaking performance.

Results

Results of the Normality Test in Oral Ability

To evaluate the appropriateness of the statistical tests applied, a normality test was conducted on the oral ability data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess whether the data deviated

from a normal distribution. If the p-value exceeds .05, the data distribution is considered normal; if it is less than .05, the distribution significantly deviates from normality.

Table 1.
Results of the Normality Test for Two Groups in Oral Pre-test

Kolmogorov-Smirnov^a			
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Implicit Group_pre	.154	30	.101
Explicit Group_pre	.149	30	.096

As shown in Table 1, the p-values for both groups in the oral pre-test exceeded .05, indicating that the data were normally distributed. Hence, parametric tests could be appropriately used.

Table 2.
Results of the Normality Test for Two Groups in Oral Post-test

Kolmogorov-Smirnov^a			
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Implicit Group post	.171	30	.117
Explicit post	.160	30	.104

The results in Table 2 show that the p-values for both groups in the post-test also exceeded .05, confirming that the oral post-test data were normally distributed and thus suitable for parametric analysis.

Results of the First Research Question

The first research question explored the effect of implicit vocabulary instruction on Iranian EFL learners' oral proficiency in a flipped classroom context. Descriptive statistics for the pre- and post-tests of the implicit group are provided in Table 3.

Table 3.
Descriptive Statistics of Implicit Group in Oral Proficiency Pretest and Posttest

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Implicit Pre	11.00	30	1.23	.25
Implicit Post	14.00	30	1.42	.22

A paired-sample t-test was used to assess the statistical significance of the difference between the pre- and post-test scores.

Table 4.
Paired Samples Test for Oral Proficiency (Implicit Group)

	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Implicit Pre - Post	-3.00	1.31	.23	-13.04	29	.000

As shown in Table 4, the mean difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$), indicating that participants in the implicit group significantly improved their oral proficiency. Consequently, the first null hypothesis, stating that implicit instruction has no effect, was rejected.

Results of the Second Research Question

The second research question investigated the impact of explicit instruction on the oral proficiency of Iranian introverted EFL learners in a flipped classroom. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics.

Table 5.
Descriptive Statistics of Explicit Group in Oral Proficiency Pretest and Posttest

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Explicit Pre	10.50	30	1.21	.23
Explicit Post	16.00	30	1.38	.20

Table 6.
Paired Samples Test for Oral Proficiency (Explicit Group)

	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Explicit Pre - Post	-4.50	1.29	.26	-17.31	29	.000

The results in Table 6 reveal a significant improvement ($p < .05$) in the oral proficiency scores of the explicit group. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was also rejected.

Results of the Third Research Question

The third research question sought to determine whether there was a significant difference in the effectiveness of implicit and explicit instruction on learners' oral proficiency. Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of the oral pre-test.

Table 7.
Descriptive Statistics of Oral Pre-test (Two Groups)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Implicit Group Pre	30	11.00	1.23	.25
Explicit Group Pre	30	10.50	1.21	.23

Table 8.
Independent Samples T-test: Oral Pre-test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error	95% CI Lower	Upper
Equal variances	-0.293	58	.770	-0.50	.471	-1.316	1.583

The p-value in Table 8 (.770) indicates no significant difference between the groups' pre-test scores.

Table 9.
Descriptive Statistics of Oral Post-test (Two Groups)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Implicit Group Post	30	14.00	1.42	.22
Explicit Group Post	30	16.00	1.38	.20

Table 10.
Independent Samples T-test: Oral Post-test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error	95% CI Lower	Upper
Equal variances	-6.91	58	.000	-2.00	.29	-2.58	-1.42

As shown in Table 10, the difference in post-test scores between the two groups was statistically significant ($p < .05$), with the explicit group outperforming the implicit group. This finding suggests that explicit instruction was more effective in enhancing oral proficiency. Thus, the third null hypothesis was also rejected.

Discussion

The integration of technology into language instruction, particularly through the flipped classroom model, has become a focal point in EFL pedagogy. This study examined the effects of implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction within a flipped learning environment on Iranian EFL learners' oral proficiency. The findings contribute to the growing body of literature that supports the flipped model as an effective approach for promoting oral language development.

One of the most significant insights from the current study is that flipped instruction enhances learners' oral proficiency, affirming previous findings by Bergmann and Sams (2014) and Lee & Wallace (2018). By allowing learners to engage with instructional materials outside of class, flipped learning not only optimizes classroom time for interaction and practice but also supports self-regulated learning, a factor that has been widely acknowledged for its impact on learner autonomy and motivation (Lai & Hwang, 2015). These results are consistent with the theoretical perspectives of Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (1988), which asserts that pre-class exposure reduces cognitive overload during real-time classroom interactions, facilitating deeper learning.

The study also revealed that both implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction positively affected oral proficiency, although explicit instruction yielded greater gains. This dual impact aligns with Kaivanpanah et al. (2021), who found that both explicit and modified-implicit methods enhanced vocabulary acquisition and retention, suggesting that integrating both methods can be pedagogically beneficial. In the context of this study, the flipped model provided an ideal setting to combine the meaningful contextual exposure advocated by Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) with the conscious attention to language forms emphasized in Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990).

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The positive effects of implicit vocabulary instruction observed in this study are supported by earlier research (Hulstijn, 2001; Malmir & Yousof, 2019) that emphasizes the role of repeated exposure in context for vocabulary internalization. Learners in the implicit group benefited from engaging with language in authentic contexts, which helped reinforce vocabulary through natural usage rather than memorization. However, the findings also reflect the view of Kaivanpanah et al. (2021) that implicit methods alone may be less effective than when they are paired with elements of explicit instruction.

Conversely, the superior performance of the explicit instruction group supports the work of Decarrico (2001) and Rieder (2003), who argue that focused instruction on form enables learners to better understand and use new vocabulary. In line with Azar and Nassiri (2014) and Abdelshaheed (2017), this study confirms that explicit vocabulary instruction may offer more immediate and measurable improvements in oral proficiency, particularly in structured classroom settings like those created through flipped learning.

These findings are further corroborated by recent empirical studies that emphasize the interactive nature of flipped classrooms as a critical element in enhancing speaking skills. Demir and Mirzaie (2023), Zhang et al. (2023), and Khatouni et al. (2024) all observed substantial improvements in EFL learners' oral performance when instruction involved collaborative and communicative in-class activities, an approach mirrored in the current study's flipped instruction framework. Similarly, Tuyen et al. (2024) and Kristyowati et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of pre-class preparation and peer interaction in boosting both fluency and learner confidence, findings that are reflected in this study's outcomes. By taking into account students' interests and cultural backgrounds, a qualitative research by Amal U, Wu, Vijayaratham P., et al. (2024)

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highlights the value of blended learning settings and a variety of teaching styles in improving educational performance.

Interestingly, the gender-based differences noted in Tuyen et al. (2024) were not a central focus of the current study, yet they raise important questions for future research on how individual differences, such as gender or learning style, may moderate the effects of instructional method. Additionally, the challenges related to student resistance and technology access, as highlighted by Chen Hsieh et al. (2016) and Bonyadi (2025), were not prominent in this research but are essential considerations for broader implementation of the flipped model.

In summary, this study affirms that flipped learning offers a flexible, learner-centered environment that effectively supports the development of oral proficiency through a combination of implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction. While explicit instruction proved more effective in yielding measurable gains within the study's timeframe, implicit learning fostered more natural and contextualized vocabulary acquisition. These findings emphasize the value of a balanced pedagogical approach, grounded in the Input Hypothesis, Noticing Hypothesis, and Cognitive Load Theory, where explicit strategies are embedded in meaningful communicative contexts.

Future research could expand on these findings by exploring the long-term effects of instructional methods across various language skills (e.g., listening, writing) and learner profiles. Investigating how factors such as motivation, learning style, and access to technology interact with flipped instruction may further inform its implementation. Ultimately, this study highlights flipped learning as an innovative and effective instructional model that enhances language proficiency while promoting learner autonomy by integrating technology and interactive classroom engagement. In recent years, the importance of integrating technology into language teaching has been increasingly emphasized, and this study provides further evidence supporting the

effectiveness of flipped classroom instruction in enhancing students' language proficiency. Vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role in developing other language skills, particularly speaking and reading. Flipped classrooms, by utilizing technology, offer a dynamic and engaging learning environment that helps enrich students' vocabulary and speaking abilities. For teachers of foreign languages, the flipped classroom approach presents an innovative and promising method for improving learners' oral proficiency.

The results of this study confirm that flipped instruction significantly enhances adult learners' L2 oral proficiency while making efficient use of class time. By incorporating both implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction, the study showed that flipped learning has a notable impact on speaking skills. Although both instructional methods were effective, explicit instruction proved to be more beneficial in improving oral proficiency. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that explicit vocabulary instruction provides a clearer, more targeted focus on language forms, leading to more immediate improvements in speaking ability.

One of the key advantages of flipped learning, as observed in this study, is its ability to motivate and engage students. By watching videos at home, students have the flexibility to review content as many times as needed, which allows them to respond more effectively during in-class activities. This flexibility not only enhances learning outcomes but also fosters a sense of autonomy and responsibility for their learning. The current study contributes to the growing body of research demonstrating the positive effects of flipped classrooms on language acquisition, particularly in the context of speaking proficiency.

Conclusion

This study presents promising results but has notable limitations. The short duration of the experiment restricts the assessment of the long-term impacts of flipped learning on language development. Additionally, the focus on a single aspect (speaking) limits generalizability to other language skills like listening, writing, or reading. A more diverse participant sample would also strengthen future research. The findings emphasize the need for language educators to leverage technology for engaging, learner-centered environments (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2023a). Flipped classrooms can optimize in-class time for interactive activities, but the success depends on aligning materials with student needs. High-impact educational practices (HIPs) pertaining to classroom self-management, student engagement, and student performance according to Rajanthran, Wider, Wong et al. (2023), can help students learn more successfully, engage more fully, and manage their classrooms better.

While both implicit and explicit instructional methods are effective, explicit instruction was found to be more beneficial for oral proficiency, suggesting the integration of explicit vocabulary teaching. Future research should include longer studies to assess the sustained impact of flipped learning, explore its effects across various language skills, and consider learner motivation and individual differences. Including diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds could also enhance understanding of flipped instruction's benefits in different contexts.

Supplementary Materials

Supplementary Material should be uploaded separately on submission.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, H.B. and H.I.; methodology, P.V.; software, M.R.; validation, H.B., P.V. and H.I.; formal analysis, M.M.; investigation, M.M.; resources, H.I.; data curation, M.R.; writing—original draft preparation, H.I.; writing—review and editing, H.B.; visualization, P.V.;

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Institutional Review Board (or Ethics Committee) of Ayatollah Amoli Branch of Islamic Azad University, Amol, Iran.

Informed Consent Statement

All participants provided informed consent before taking part in this study. They were thoroughly informed about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participation was entirely voluntary, with participants free to withdraw at any time without any consequences. All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality and used exclusively for the purposes specified in the research.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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